

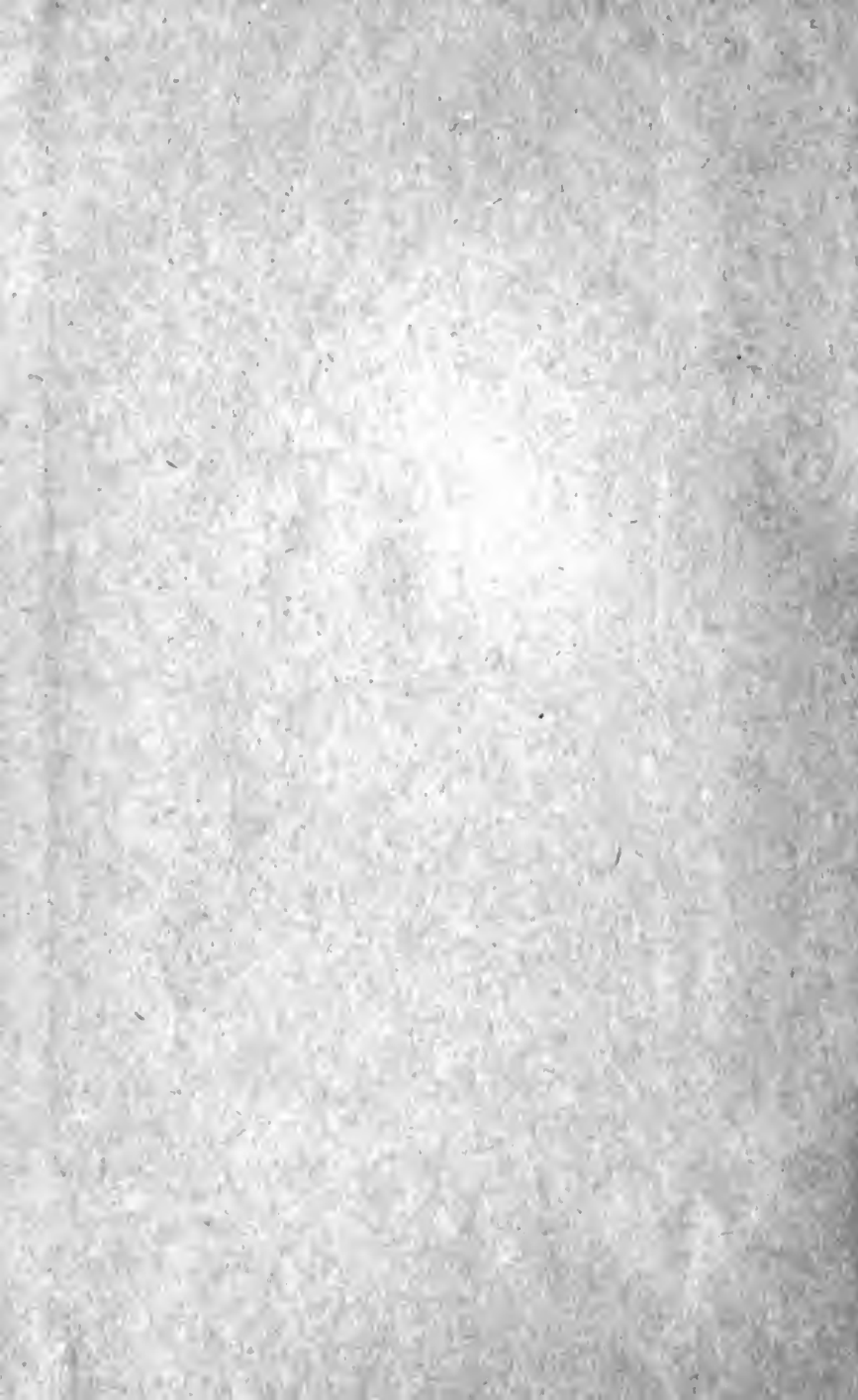


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FABLES IN SONG





# FABLES IN SONG

BY

ROBERT LORD LYTTON

AUTHOR OF 'POEMS BY OWEN MEREDITH'

VOL. II.

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## ERRATA.

Vol. II., p. 7, 9th line from top of page, *for*  
Should ~~scarce~~ such momentary beauty back,  
*Read*  
Should scare such momentary beauty back.

Vol. II., p. 65, *for*  
Fatigue themselves in torturing mankind,  
Get out of breath in running down their prey!  
*Read*  
Get out of breath in running down their prey,  
Fatigue themselves in torturing mankind !

Vol. II., Table of Contents, page vi ; also page 161, title ;  
and 163, 165, head of pages ; *for* Suum quique *read* Suum  
cuique.



## INTRODUCTORY.

---

### 1.

A LITTLE bird fares well in Spring.

For all she wants she finds enough,  
And every casual common thing  
She makes her own without rebuff.

### 2.

First, wool and hair from sheep and cow :

Then twig and straw, to bind them fast,  
From thicket and from thatch : and now  
A little nest is built at last.

### 3.

From out that little nest shall rise,

When woods are warm, a living song,  
A music mixt with light, that flies  
Thro' fluttering shade the leaves among.

## 4.

Its home ? straw, twig, and wool, and hair.  
Mere nothings, these, to house or herd.  
Who made them something, made them fair,  
Making them all her own ? The bird.

## 5.

O little bird, take everything,  
And build thy nest without rebuff,  
And, when thy nest is builded, sing !  
For who can praise thy song enough ?

## 6.

And some believe (believe they wrong ?)  
If like the bird the bard could sing,  
That, like the bird, fit home for Song  
The bard would find in everything

## 7.

By casual grace of common chance  
From house and herd, from thick and thatch,  
Assign'd for Song's inheritance  
Had Song the gift that grace to catch.



## 8.

Such things I found, by passers-by  
As rubbish from the roadside thrust ;  
Which poets, seeking poesy,  
Disdain'd to rescue from the dust.

## 9.

Yet here they are—not rubbish now  
I fain would hope. Do critics stare,  
Reserve applause, and rub the brow ?  
Oh that a little bird I were !



# FABLES IN SONG.



## XXIX.

### FIAT JUSTITIA.

#### CANTO THE FIRST.—THEORY.

##### 1.

SIMPLICIUS was a man of good condition,  
Whose naturally easy disposition  
Found in his easy fortunes natural vent.  
He, for that reason, was benevolent ;  
But tho' he sought to find Benevolence  
Efficient sanction in the social sense  
Of Justice, much his feelings were offended  
By the unsocial, unjust, things that men did.

For, in the world around him, everywhere  
 He saw but envy, arroganee, and care,  
 Malice, and fear, oppression, and mistrust,  
 Anarchic, anti-social, soul-depraving.

## 2.

“ Alas ! ” he thought, “ if men would be but just,  
 Then life would be for every man worth having !  
 But, tho', in practice, all of them ignore  
 What justice claims, in theory, they cry  
 ‘ *Fiat justitia !* ’ adding evermore  
 ‘ *Pereat mundus !* ’ *Pereat mundus*, why ?  
 Wherefore a *pereat* to this glorious world,  
 Which cordially to all of us cries *vivat* ?  
 Far be from me that hateful *pereat* hurl'd !  
 The goal 'tis my ambition to arrive at  
 Is Justice and Enjoyment too, combined.”

## 3.

Oft hath the love of justice caused confusion.  
 And much this thought disturb'd the good man's mind,  
 Until it brought him to the strange conclusion  
 That Nature in befitting form presents  
 To every man himself turn'd inside out ;  
 So that we contemplate our own contents  
 In beast and bird. Now this belief, no doubt,  
 Was the blind offspring of imagination.  
 But, as for him, it help'd him to become

Quite comfortable with the whole creation ;  
For, when he walk'd abroad, he felt at home.

## 4.

Thus, if in sight a shy deer chanced to flit  
Down some dim glade, scarce seen ere gone again.  
“’Tis it !” he murmur’d, “I remember it ;  
A timid thought, that long about my brain  
I’ve noticed lurking. Pity, the world’s pack  
With boisterous bark, whene’er it steals in view,  
Should scarce such momentary beauty back ;  
So fair its flittings, and, alas, so few !”  
Or he would muse, when, home at eve to stall,  
He watch’d the slow kine wend their wonted way,  
“Lo, life’s tame habitudes ! whose footsteps fall  
Along the self-same pastures every day,  
And, every night, by the same trodden traces  
Of usage, back to the same commonplaces.  
Dull plodders these ! Their placid life goes pat  
Only whilst round them, comfortably creast,  
Clings Custom’s garb, wherein they all grow fat.  
Freedom is death to each domestic beast.  
The wolf and fox are better off in that.  
They for themselves know how to shift at least.  
Adventurous liberty is theirs. That’s much.  
For, tho’ they use it but to rob and kill,  
The world would languish wanting some such touch  
Of vagabond and savage instinct. Still  
The wild beast passion for adventure wild

We all have in us, hide it how we will.  
 And when I see a white dove, plump and mild,  
 I understand the vulture. Nature mocks  
 Man's passions with pathetic paradox ;  
 Sweet simple Innocence can never quite  
 Our torpid sympathies from slumber stir,  
 Nor hold our interest in her at the height,  
 Till things are going not quite well with her."

## 5.

From these examples, which are not capricious,  
 Of how his witless fancy wander'd on,  
 Sagacious readers may perceive Simplicius  
 Was, certes, somewhat of a simpleton.  
 Tho' not, for that, worse off than his judicious  
 And candid friends who labour'd to disclose  
 The fallacies he cherish'd unsuspicious ;  
 And lost their labour, as you may suppose.  
 For aye, the poorer that he is, the more  
 A man fights hard to keep, in purse or pate,  
 Prolong'd possession of his little store.  
 Whereon the world remarks, in tones irate,  
 (As tho' itself were perfect on the score  
 Of yielding to beliefs that will not mate  
 With those which it was wont to hold before)  
 " Stupidity is always obstinate !"  
 But surely they, whose stock of wits is small,  
 Do well to grasp it with resolved rigidity ;  
 For, if a man be stupid, no endeavour

Upon your part to break down the stolidity  
His instinct builds about him like a wall  
Can, even if successful, make him clever ;  
And, if you take from him his own stupidity,  
You leave him nothing of his own at all.

## 6.

This man had much that, without contradiction,  
He call'd his own : and, notably his plan  
For making justice upon earth no fiction.  
“ For wherefore with his fellow-men is man,”  
Simplicius ask'd, “ accustom'd to resort ?  
'Tis for their qualities, we must surmise.  
I mean, their good ones : since where these fall short  
Man shuns his fellows. But all men comprise  
Within them qualities that ill comport  
One with the other, and in turn each tries  
To spoil the rest. The beasts have naught to do  
But to embody each some part of man ;  
Which, for that reason, in each beast we view  
More pleasurably perfect than it can  
By any possibility be found  
In man himself ; whose qualities, ill-pack't,  
Jumble each other in their narrow bound,  
And muddle his humanity in fact.  
For instance. I've a mineral collection  
Of costly crystals, perfect in all parts ;  
And, in it, specimens, that fill one section,  
Of felspar, and of mica, and of quartz.

This granite block (the bench whereon I sit)  
Hath, as by close inspection I divine,  
The self-same minerals mixt up in it.  
But what a difference between these and mine !  
The sparkling columns of my quartz o'erthrown,  
And pounded into powder ! every bit  
Of my poor felspar, featureless ! each crown  
Of my fine mica's fairy foliation  
Crumpled into amalgamated grit !  
The whole—a dull disturb'd crystallisation,  
Where nothing is as it would fain have been !  
So man. Not so the simpler beasts, I ween.  
What's Charm ? The bird. And what is Grace ! The cat.  
What is Fidelity ? The dog. I know  
(And I confess that I am grieved thereat)  
These creatures eat each other. But even so  
Conflicting virtues live in man ; no less  
Discordantly than cat and dog together ;  
Striving each other's merits to suppress.  
Grace, if she catch it, leaves not Charm a feather.  
Whilst she herself, unless she can contrive  
To scratch his eyes out, by Fidelity  
Is maul'd to death, or merely left alive  
A wreck of bones. Can Prejudice say why ?”

## 7.

For all these reasons, since Simplicius thought  
The best companions that a man can have  
Are innocence and charm together brought,



Fidelity, and grace, and humour grave,  
 A bird, and cat, and dog, and bear, he bought :  
 But kept them each apart, exclaiming—" *Fiat*  
*Justitia, vivat mundus*,—beast and man, too !"  
 The special qualities he set so high at  
 The culminating point of each *pro tanto*,  
 As well as some defects he wink'd his eye at,  
 Are faithfully set forth in our next Canto.

## CANTO THE SECOND.—PRACTICE.

## 1.

Charm, in a blackbird's brazen cage confined,  
 Was somewhat shy and wild at first of all.  
 But to his lot the bird became resign'd,  
 When daily to that favour'd lot did fall  
 Fine sand, fresh water, and luxurious bits  
 Of bullock's heart, that deck'd the cage's slits,  
 As venison, scenting gusts that keep it pure,  
 Hangs in the larder of an epicure ;  
 With carrots, cut in slices, eggs of ants,  
 Maggots, and all things that a blackbird wants,  
 For dainty relish of his daily fare.

## 2.

Here be it said that to his first essay  
 Simplicius, though no doubt a doctrinaire,

Applied his doctrine in a general way,  
And prudently decided to forbear  
From pushing to extremes its leading principle.  
For, since reformers fail when they attempt  
At making Justice all at once invincible,  
He from her jurisdiction left exempt  
(As minor matters which he took no heed of)  
The grubs, and eggs, and worms, his bird had need of.  
The grateful Bird lived, happier day by day,  
A life harmonious with its lot quotidian ;  
And, if 'twas still an elegy, his lay  
Had notes, at least, more joyous than Ovidian.

## 3.

As for the fluffy, puffy, plump white Cat,  
If *she* were not completely comfortable,  
There surely never was a diplomat  
Half such a humbug, half so slyly able  
To simulate the feelings he should feel,  
And those he feels, and should not, to conceal.  
The chief part of her life-long holiday  
(As tho' it were her only care on earth  
To keep her soft self warm) a clump she lay  
Of cream-white languid limbs beside the hearth ;  
Or rubb'd her lithe back in a flattering bow  
Against the legs of her good lord and master,  
Smoothing those spotless flakes of furry snow  
In which, for whiteness, not Mont Blanc surpass'd  
her ;

Or, in the firelight's fluctuating glow,  
Curl'd on his lap and safe from all disaster,  
She purr'd as tho' she to herself, half-sleeping,  
Were telling o'er her dreams in drowsy tone ;  
Or else, about the chairs and tables leaping,  
(A frolic phantom scarcely seen ere gone)  
She whisk'd, and frisk'd, and flitted here and there,  
Fitful as fancy, and as childhood fair.

## 4.

To these two qualities of Charm and Grace  
Which he in Bird and Cat together got,  
Simplicius added, in the third good place,  
Fidelity—so true, man finds it not  
Save in a dog. The Dog of our Simplicius  
Was great and good ; and well deserved, poor fellow,  
A name less ominous of deeds flagitious  
Than chance had given him—say Philax, Bello,  
Or Lion, even, or Turk—for he was bold  
(Albeit without a touch of temper vicious)  
But Nero ? . . . cramm'd with cruelties untold,  
Whose character was, like his name, nigritious,  
—A name recalling murders manifold !  
Such was the name this dog, by chance capricious,  
Had been baptised with, when, but three months old,  
His tender age might, sure, have guaranteed him  
Against the libellous title thus decreed him.

## 5.

If pure gold, oozed from out the Age of Gold,  
Could, in a living form, have glow'd on earth,  
None better fitted to present, and hold  
Unsullied, its primæval perfect worth  
Could earth have found it, than our Nero's own ;  
Nor more in colour kindred to the hue  
Whereby that noble metal may be known.  
For tawny-colour'd was our Nero too,  
As gold is : short-hair'd, all a yellow brown ;  
Save for a single streak of glossy black  
That, with straightforward purpose, went right down  
The whole length of his honourable back,  
And his most eloquently honest tail ;  
Which wagg'd warm welcome to the world all round.  
Black, too, and bright as brightly burnisht mail,  
The single star that his fair forehead crown'd,  
And black his muzzle was : the unshell'd snail  
No blacker shines, whose damp and jetty sheen  
Jewels the fresh stalks of the rain-drench'd fennel.  
When Nero, his stoop'd head flat-based between  
Firm-planted forepaws, peeping from his kennel,  
Lay stretch'd sedate in soothing noontide sleep ;  
Whilst loyal vigilance unlull'd and keen  
(No sound escaping its quick silent comment)  
Still linger'd in the watchful tremulous wink  
Of drowsy lids that twitch'd at every moment,  
And duty sat in serious wrinkles deep  
Across his brow's sagacious breadth,—I think

That had some Attic sculptor seen that sight,  
Grasping his chisel with an eager hand,  
He would have cried, in satisfied delight,  
“Behold the perfect sculpturesque expression  
Of PROPERTY!” And, forced to understand  
The imprudence of his wonted prepossession  
Against the law of Moses and the land,  
A thief, perchance, some honest awe might feel,  
And pass on murmuring “Thou shalt not steal!”

## 6.

Between Fidelity, and Charm, and Grace,  
For Humour of a grave and thoughtful kind,  
In ursine form, long while a vacant place  
Simplicius kept before he chanced to find  
Its fit incumbent. For the ursine race,  
Whose sage demeanour and prodigious force  
Might with the race of man have long competed  
Had they but chosen to dispute man's course,  
Have, far from man, to hermit haunts retreated,  
And lone they dwell among the mountains lonely.  
Man boasts, as tho' the trick must needs endear him  
To all four-footed animals at least,  
That he can go upon his hind paws only.  
For this, and for his faculty to feast  
Upon all kinds of food, the beasts revere him  
As being the most universal beast.  
But in these two respects the Bear comes near him;  
Tho' differing in a third (and not, I fear

To man's advantage) namely in good-nature.  
O Timon ! Timon ! hadst thou been a bear,  
Those maledictions, by a human creature  
On human creatures hurl'd, not even despair  
Would then have wrung from thy resentment. Guile,  
Deceit, and treachery, and treason black  
Bruin (for so was named in simple style  
This shaggy much-tried sage) had known, alack,  
In all their hateful human forms, long while  
Ere from a filthy vagrant Bosniac  
Simplicius bought him—unembitter'd yet,  
And so good-natured that across his back  
He let a pert and pranksome monkey get,  
Pretend to ride him, and, impetuous, smack  
A saucy whip. Himself a minuet  
With sad and stately gesture sometimes deign'd  
To dance to music rude of drum and fife,  
Tho' oft the mirth of vulgar crowds profaned  
This melancholy pastime of a life  
Which had known better days. Alas poor Bruin !  
A trustful nature and, for safe fruition,  
A love, too fond—of honey—proved his ruin.  
Rogues had imposed on his sweet disposition  
And made him smart for it. But Fortune now  
Seem'd on his fate to smile with fairer brow.  
Simplicius built him in the castle court  
A spacious mansion for his calm resort.  
Rail'd parapets of stone did there environ  
His sleeping chamber girt with grates of iron.  
And, in the midst of this deep-sunk domain,

A dead tree, planted by man's labour fast,  
Served for his perch whene'er the sage was fain  
(Like "Science in her speculative tower")  
A general glance around the world to cast,  
With soul unbounded by his lonely bower.

## 7.

So in Simplicius' hospitable hall  
Did Grace and Charm, its daily inmates, dwell.  
And, round about those happy precincts, all  
Went blithe and "merry as a marriage bell."  
The Bird "his native wood-notes warbled wild."  
The Cat, like some white curl'd-up humming shell,  
Purr'd by the hearth contentment calm and mild.  
The Dog bark'd welcome loud and wagg'd delight  
To his approving master morn and night.  
And he, the blissful owner of these joys,  
When he, at any moment, felt inclined  
To meditative moods, whose charm decoys  
From shallower pleasures oft the pensive mind,  
Would sit and muse above that bear-pit wide.  
Whence many a mournful monitory growl  
With solemn music stirr'd and edified  
To heights sublime his contemplative soul.  
Sullen it was, nay surly seem'd the sound.  
But surly too, nor feebly feminine,  
Is that majestic charm by fancy found  
In Melancholy's deep and sullen eyne  
What time she doth a manly sex assume.

And that is why, when either love or wine  
In manly bosoms breeds ungenial gloom,  
Chilling with churlish scowl some revel garish,  
We call such melancholy conduct—bearish.

CANTO THE THIRD.—EXPERIENCE.

1.

This pleasant life, so calm and so caressing,  
Was interrupted by a journey brief  
Simplicius, on account of business pressing,  
Was forced to undertake. Before the chief  
His castle left, he call'd into his presence  
An old retainer born beneath its roof,  
Of all domestic virtues the quintessence ;  
A tried and trusted spirit—above proof.  
Whom (to secure administrative unity)  
With counsel carefully minute and clear  
He gave in charge of his beloved community,  
The Dog, the Cat, the Blackbird, and the Bear.

2.

The business settled to his satisfaction  
Which drew Simplicius from his own abode,  
He, with a mind relieved from all distraction  
And full of longings, on his homeward road



One evening reach'd, when it was somewhat late,  
The last post station. 'Twas a tiny town,  
But few hours distant from his own estate.  
But there, his horses having broken down,  
For fresh relays he was constrain'd to wait.  
Besides, a storm was coming on. So, there  
Resolving prudently to pass the night,  
He order'd rooms and supper at THE BEAR ;  
A little hostel cheerful, clean, and bright,  
Whose landlord was postmaster of the village,  
A farmer, too, with land in his own tillage.

## 3.

The candles lighted, and the clean cloth spread,  
The curtains drawn in cosier proximity  
About the smooth sheets of the snowy bed,  
For pure dreams shelter'd by demurest dimity ;  
Dandling his napkin with important air  
The obsequious waiter offer'd to Simplicius,  
Proud of its length, a boastful bill of fare,  
And list of wines, which he declared delicious.  
Careless as tho' it were a begging letter  
Simplicius glanced it over ; and, because  
He trusted not its pledge of viands better,  
He was about to order without pause  
A simple steak—when these words proved a whetter  
To his attention—' *Bear's paws, Tartar sauce.*'

## 4.

This dish to him was quite a novel one.  
There is no reason that we can declare  
For thinking a plain beefsteak, if well done,  
Less good for supper than grill'd paws of bear.  
But man's pall'd appetite his inclination  
Impels to range beyond the bound precise  
Of what he needs for simple sustentation :  
And to the victims of his gourmandise  
Simplicius felt a forcible temptation  
To add (since new they were, and might be nice)  
Grill'd paws of bear. Just as no strange intrigue,  
That to the list of all his old damnations  
Added a new seduction, could fatigue  
Don Juan in his search of fresh sensations.  
So, for the sole dish of his lonely mess table,  
Simplicius order'd *bear's paws*, to replenish  
The stock of his experiences digestible,  
And wash'd them down with half a flask of Rhenish.  
The dish he chose was perfectly detestable ;  
But still his stomach did not prove rebellious,  
For fancy flatter'd him that he had fed  
On food which might have tempted a Vitellius.  
In which benign belief he went to bed.

## 5.

Near morn he dream'd a dream. He dream'd his Bear  
Was turn'd into a Lady, tall and stately :

And dream'd that he, himself, her fingers fair  
With fervour kiss'd. Then, as she smiled sedately,  
He sigh'd "Ah madam! if you could but tell  
How charming, grill'd with Tartar sauce, it is,  
Before the altar, with your heart as well,  
You would on me bestow the hand I kiss!"  
His sleep was broken by the Postboy's horn  
Just as the fair dame of his dream replied  
Blushing, and like a lady nobly born  
Whose passion struggles with a modest pride,  
"Ah Baron, libertines such flatterers are!  
And trustful fools are we. Unhand me, pray!  
There's nothing in the world that can compare  
With dog, served up in honey, the new way."

## 6.

The sun was beaming brightly thro' the casement,  
Mine host had brought the coffee. From repose,  
Still half between amusement and amazement,  
Simplicius, smiling at his dream, arose:  
Finish'd his breakfast: lighted his cigar:  
And sprang into his carriage, quite elate.  
He knew his own good mansion was not far.  
A few hours brought him to the castle gate.

## 7.

He cross'd the court, surprised and somewhat sadden'd  
That Nero, faithful guardian of his hall,

With no gay bark his silent entry gladden'd.  
 Nor came the good dog to his master's call.  
 But more, anon, that master's heart was grieved  
 When, to him coming o'er the cloister'd flags,  
 His agèd Major Domo he perceived  
 With palsied head bound up in bloody rags.  
 And "Ah my lord," the old man cried, "alas!  
 Alas, and woe the day!"—"Why, honest Andrew,  
 Why such affliction? What hath come to pass?"  
 Only a heavy sigh that agèd man drew.  
 "What mean those bloody bandages?"—"Dear  
     master,"  
 The old man whimper'd with a whine of woe,  
 "My hair's clean gone in that accurst disaster,  
 And to my grave I in a wig must go."

## 8.

"Man, what disaster?"—"O, the Bird, the Bird!"  
 "What bird? and what has happen'd? tell me what?"  
 Simplicius cried by sad forebodings stirr'd,  
 "And O the Cat," groan'd Andrew, "O the Cat!"  
 Then on he rambled, all ejaculation,  
 "O, my good master! O, my hair! my hair!  
 And O, the Dog!" With rising agitation  
 "The dog?" exclaim'd Simplicius. "And the Bear,  
 The Bear!" groan'd Andrew. "What a situation!"  
 "Quick!" cried his master, "all the truth declare."  
 Then, drop by drop as 'twere, this sad narration  
 Oozed from the depths of the old man's despair.

## 9.

Andrew, the moment that his lord was gone,  
Had yielded to a wish long while repress,  
A wild emotion ever and anon  
Haunting good servants—to disturb their rest,  
And, more, their master's. For so fine a border  
Between extremes is in this planet scurvy,  
That when they want to set the house in order  
Your servants always turn it topsy-turvy.  
The house, in this case, was the bird's house merely ;  
But much the bird disliked that innovation.  
And we ourselves, who have experienced yearly  
The same conditions, and the same sensation,  
Can understand the bird's bewilder'd rage.  
Retreating restlessly, without success,  
From one nook to another of his cage,  
He tried to escape that demon, Cleanliness ;  
And at the last, his incommoded premises  
Deserting altogether, forth he flew.  
But that desertion the avenging Nemesis  
Of violated custom did pursue.  
Infatuating freedom more and more  
Confused his soul, already in confusion ;  
And now against the ceiling, now the floor,  
He flounced with flop, and flutter, and contusion ;  
Flew bounce against the cornice of the door,  
Then, clamorous, at the casement's cold delusion  
Which mock'd him (since for him they waved no  
more)

With sight of waving woods in wild profusion.  
 At length he turn'd to books for consolation,  
 And o'er the bookcase perch'd in Gothic gloom.  
 Andrew, bewilder'd too, took that occasion  
 To hasten to the pantry for a broom.  
 But when, with this new engine of persuasion,  
 He to the chase return'd,—alas o'erpowering  
 (As well it might be) was his consternation  
 To find the Cat (more quick than he) devouring  
 The last few bloody feathers of the Bird.

## 10.

“Beast!” cried Simplicius, when the story came  
 To this sad point, and by resentment stirr'd  
 He rose in haste, “I’ll bring her to the scratch!”  
 “Alas, my lord,” old Andrew cried with shame,  
 “That’s what I tried. But cats are hard to catch.  
 I hurl’d my broomstick, like a javelin, at her :  
 She thro’ the door, left open, darted : hard  
 Behind her, down the stairs with cry and clatter,  
 I after : and so out across the yard.  
 This Nero saw : and judged the Cat in fault.  
 Nor judged he wrong. The little murderess fled ;  
 But Nero (honest dog) still barking ‘halt’  
 Fleet on her sly and felon footsteps sped.  
 Poor Puss ! . . . He meant it for the best . . .  
                   and yet——  
 ’Twixt dog and cat there’s ancient feud ’tis said,  
 Like that between my lords of Capulet

And Montague, of which in books I've read.  
But I'll believe not that our Nero's breast  
Lodged hate like theirs—or any hate at all.  
Too good was he ! He meant it for the best.  
The Cat had sprung upon the Bear-pit's wall.  
The Dog sprang after. With a gallant grip  
He pinn'd her by the throat, and . . . squeak !”—  
“ The brute ! ”

Simplicius cried, “ but he shall feel my whip.  
Go, fetch it ! ” Andrew, melancholy mute,  
Turn'd, brush'd his hand across his eyes, and said  
“ Nero will never feel the whip again.”

## 11.

The old man sigh'd profoundly, shook his head,  
And then resumed. “ Regrets and threats are vain.  
O what a sight ! methinks I see it yet.  
The Cat was down. The Dog above her stood.  
But both were struggling on the parapet.  
The Cat's white coat was red with clots of blood,  
With blood the Dog's black muzzle. And meanwhile,  
Perch'd on his pole, the Bear this conflict eyed ;  
Smiling, as well as such a brute can smile,  
And wagg'd his hideous head from side to side.  
His paws, with an atrocious affectation,  
Cross'd loose and languid o'er his bulky breast,  
His small eyes, all unwonted animation,  
Glowing expectant with a greedy zest.  
And all this time the monster humm'd with pleasure,

And all this time the moment's helpless dread  
Crippled me like a paralytic seizure.  
The Cat, at last, lay still. I deem'd her dead.  
Is there a second Cat-world, as I'm fain  
To hope, where cats redeem'd, without relapse,  
By birds untempted, and by dogs unslain,  
Live and do better? Pardon'd there, perhaps,  
Each sinful puss may yet to peace attain.  
Else why earth's torturing trials, dogs, guns, traps?  
Whilst thus I mused, up sprang the Cat again,  
And dealt the Dog a buffet in the chaps.  
That was her dying effort. In surprise  
The Dog set up a howl—recoil'd—slipp'd—fell  
Into the pit—I turn'd away mine eyes,  
And what I could not see I cannot tell.  
It overcomes me. Never to that wall  
My looks are turn'd without a pang of pain.  
He was a dog who, take him all in all,  
We shall not look upon his like again."

## 12.

And, since the old man's utterance fail'd him, here  
Stepp'd, cap in hand, the Keeper from the clan  
Of listening servants who had gather'd near,  
And "Save your lordship's presence," he began,  
"'Tis too much for the old one. Let him be.  
More bravely then, my lord, himself he bore.  
Three skips into the house to find the key,  
And down the stairs again in three skips more.



Next moment in old Bruin's den was he.  
Ay, without fear ! without his hat, too. Well,  
Meanwhile there rested nothing but a ruin  
Of broken bones to mark where Nero fell,  
And these the Bear was mumbling. ' Bruin ! Bruin !  
Bruin, you brute ! ' cried Andrew. Bruin stopp'd  
Mouthing the mangled morsels of poor Nero  
Which leisurely with surly calm he dropp'd,  
And Lord ! my heart sank in me down to zero  
When I beheld him on his hind legs stalking  
(As proud as any Christian, please your lordship)  
And, with a growl of beastly rage, half walking  
Half reeling, as we landsmen do aboard ship,  
Up to the old one."—" Shoot him ! " groan'd Simplicius.  
The Keeper nodded, " That's already done.  
For I was there. I knew the brute was vicious,  
And with me, by good luck, I had my gun.  
'Twas plaguy hard to aim, tho', 'twixt the pair o' them,  
Bruin's black waistcoat, Master Andrew's blue one—  
Hard to see which the man, and which the bear, o'  
them—  
Half hid by both, one small white spot—the true one—  
No bigger than a button. Well, I cover—  
Fire—and three fall—Andrew, the Bear, and I.  
Ay, ay ! 'twas not my gun that kick'd me over.  
My heart went thump, and that I'll not deny.  
When I came round, my wife says, like a dumb thing  
I stared about, and whiter than a cheese.  
Good reason, too ! I knew I had kill'd something,  
The Bear or Andrew—one, or both of these.

'Twas Andrew luckily—I mean, 'twas he  
My shot had saved. The Bear was dead as mutton.  
My ball was in him just where it should be,  
In that white spot no bigger than a button.

## 13.

“Ay, dead and done! But 'faith! in his last jigs  
He scalp'd the old one clean as Indians do;  
And that's why Andrew talks of wearing wigs,  
Forgetting he was bald ten years ago.  
But since that day the old one's just” . . . And here  
The keeper slowly lifted to his forehead  
A furtive finger. Lost in musings drear  
“Ah,” sigh'd Simplicius, “it is all too horrid!”  
Then, with a vacant dreamy air, as one  
Whose thoughts are vex'd by the interposition  
Of some vague memory that's come and gone  
Before it finds within him recognition,  
“What with the carcass of the Bear was done?”

## 14.

The Keeper answer'd “With my lord's permission,  
'A badger's half a sort of bear,' said I.  
The badger is the Keeper's perquisite,  
And, deeming thus the Bear mine own, for why?  
I shot him, nor could bear be better hit,  
I skinn'd the beast. His grease I melted down.  
The barbers bought it. For next winter's cold

His fur I kept. And in the market town  
 His venison to a poulterer I sold."  
 "Heavens!" groan'd Simplicius, and against his brow  
 He struck his fist. For now the truth flash'd clear,  
 And he remorsefully remember'd how  
 He had eaten his own bear's paws at THE BEAR.

## 15.

The Cat had eaten up the Bird : ere she  
 In turn, a victim, to the Dog had pass'd.  
 The Bear had feasted on the Dog : and he,  
 Horror, had feasted on the Bear at last !  
 Thus he who, for their orgies too carnivorous,  
 Against Cat, Dog, and Bear had just protested  
 Was proved (from such injustice Saints deliver us !)  
 To have both eaten, relish'd, and digested  
 The Bear, and, with the Bear, the Bear's own dinner,  
 Bird, Cat, and Dog, besides—vicarious sinner !

## 16.

He gazed around him with a rueful eye  
 That miss'd each loved and lately murder'd quality.  
 In fancy he beheld the Blackbird die ;  
 The Cat a victim to the Dog's brutality ;  
 The Dog devour'd by the Bear ; and by  
 Himself the Bear, with Roman sensuality  
 Of stomach *audax omnia perpeti* !  
 And, seeing too, no fancy but reality,  
 The scalp'd pate of his mangled Major Domo,  
 "*Fiat justitia*," groan'd he, "*pereat homo* !"

## XXX.

## THE ROCK.

## 1.

For ages standing, still for ages stood  
    (To stand and to withstand was all his care)  
A Rock : whose feet were in the unfathom'd flood,  
    His forehead in the illimitable air.  
Upon his brow the centuries beat,  
    And left it, as they found it, bare ;  
The rolling waters round his feet  
    Roll'd, and roll'd elsewhere.

## 2.

And those cold feet of his the fawning waves  
    Lick'd, slave-like, ever with a furtive sigh ;  
Save when at times they rose, and (still like slaves)  
    In rebel scum, with insubordinate cry,  
Strove, and, tho' fiercely, strove in vain  
    To drag down him that stood so high ;  
Then fell ; and at his feet again  
    Fawn'd—with a furtive sigh.

## 3.

The Storm and he were brothers ; but in feud.

One lived a station'd, one a wandering, life :

This to subdue, that to be unsubdued,

Put forth his strength in unfraternal strife.

The burden of one weary brother

Was to resist, and to remain :

A fiercer fate impell'd the other

To strive, and strive in vain.

## 4.

A homeless wanderer over the wide world,

A sullen spirit with a fleeting form,

That pass'd in soil'd and tumid mantle furl'd,

For ever and for ever roam'd the Storm.

But o'er the sea, with shoulders bent

And backward scowl before the blast,

He, flying, to his discontent

Beheld the Rock stand fast ;

## 5.

And lingering hover'd, restless, round and round,

To vex the rest that vex'd him. But the Rock,

Beaten and buffeted, yet not uncrown'd,

Stood, and withstood ; and sadly seem'd to mock

The Force which cries from age to age

In accent fierce "Give way !"

With that which, ignorant of rage,  
For ever answers "Nay!"

## 6.

Then stoop'd the Storm, and whisper'd to the waves,  
"Are ye so many, and afraid of one?  
The world is yours, if ye but knew, poor slaves!  
Dare to be lords, and lo, the world is won!"  
To that wild tempter's whisper rose  
Their hundred heads, soon dasht in spray;  
But these succeeding fast to those  
Renew'd the frustrate fray;

## 7.

Until the Storm could lift the waves no higher;  
Then, with a scornful sigh letting them fall,  
And self-pursued by unappeased desire,  
He left them, as he found them, slaves. And all  
That strife without result for ever  
Ends only to begin again;  
Subsiding but for fresh endeavour,  
Eternal, yet in vain.

## 8.

But, in the intervals of time, among  
The fissures of the Rock, have birds of prey  
Built themselves nests: who, fishing for their young,  
Dive in the waves, and snatch the fish away.

And heaven its feather'd generations  
Renews to vex from year to year  
The sea's folk, as their scaly nations  
Appear, and disappear.

## 9.

The fishes needs must suffer and endure,  
Unable to retaliate on the birds ;  
And of their fishy wrongs which find no cure  
The wide-mouth'd fools complain in watery words,  
"Hath Providence for pasture given  
The weak for ever to the strong ?  
Is there no justice, then, in Heaven ?  
No sense of right and wrong ?"

## 10.

The Storm (that never leaves it long at rest)  
Return'd anon to trouble the still sea,  
But that eternal revolutionist  
Seem'd to these short-lived sufferers to be  
A young deliverer, waited long,  
Whom, in the fulness of late time,  
Heaven raised to rectify the wrong,  
And punish prosperous crime.

## 11.

And when the devastating waves roll'd high,  
And drave the birds, and drench'd their dwellings  
thro',

The fishes cried, exulting, " Verily  
There *is* a judge that judgeth just and true !  
The judgment day hath dawn'd at last :  
Now strikes the final judgment hour :  
The future shall redeem the past,  
And lift the poor to power !"

## 12.

The Rock stood fast—tho' bare of nest and bird :  
The Storm was spent : the sunk sea ceased from  
striving,  
And, in the stillness, that grey hermit heard  
This fuss of exultation and thanksgiving.  
The water trickled from his wet  
Wave-ravaged crest, and dripp'd below,  
As, after battle, drops the sweat  
Down from a hero's brow.

## 13.

" Is it for this," within him mused the strong  
And melancholy spirit of his life,  
" For *this*, that I stand here — who knoweth how  
long,  
Who knoweth wherefore ?—in eternal strife !  
And gaze into the nether deep  
And up to heaven's huge hollowness,  
And, while the ages o'er me sweep,  
Question the void abyss,



## 14.

“Sad, yet supreme ; and weary, yet awake !  
And must I listen still, and still must hear,  
How of a final judgment—for their sake—  
(*Their* sake, who but appear to disappear !)  
These sprats and sparrows gurgle and twitter ?”  
So mused the Rock ; his gray  
Bare summit redden’d by the glitter  
Of the departing day.

## 15.

And, whilst he mused, athwart the trembling plain  
His shade, unnoticed, sped with stealthy flight  
Far on the dim horizon to attain  
The obscurely safe asylum of the night ;  
As tho’, for once, unvext, unview’d,  
That Rock’s soul fain would be  
From the eternal solitude  
Of his own greatness free.

## 16.

But greatness grants to greatness no escape.  
Fierce on the timorous vagrant’s furtive track  
The sudden sunrise flashing smote this shape  
Of baffled darkness to its birthplace back ;  
And there, where Splendour seem’d to mock  
Its slave whose flight was vain,  
Deep in his own brave heart the Rock  
Buried his shade again.

## XXXI.

## D E M O S.

## PART I.

WHEN Light first dawn'd, to Chaos came repose :  
Shapes, from the sheeted shapelessness unfurl'd,  
Took rank in order ranged : the Mountains rose,  
And found themselves the monarchs of the world.

The sunrise, bearing tribute, all night long  
Travell'd the globe, and brought them eastern gold  
Daily at earliest dawn. Bright breastplates strong  
The skill'd frost forged them of white-colour'd cold.  
Round their firm thrones sharp lightnings flash'd like  
swords,  
And guarding thunders girt their crowns. The plain  
Bore, in fond homage to his highborn lords,  
The floating purple of their princely train.  
Forest, to deck their pomp, with forest vied,  
Mantled, and clasp'd them round with emerald zones;

Whilst dainty lawns spread broider'd carpets wide  
O'er all the soft approaches to their thrones,  
For easy kneeling. Clouds, like stately cares  
That haunt the sombre foreheads of the great,  
Burthen'd their brows. But eagles, too, were  
theirs,  
That eyed the sun undazzled, and elate  
As bold ambitions in imperial minds.  
To earth's far frontiers, bearing banner'd shower  
And blowing solemn trump, the wing'd winds,  
Their wandering heralds, did proclaim their power.  
The fertile rivers, and fresh streams, were fed  
On the rich bounty of their royal grace.  
Each rebel billow at their feet fell dead.  
They were creation's crown'd and sceptred race.

But, scorn'd, obscure, down trampled in the dirt  
And miry drench of their dark hollows, lay  
Unable to uplift himself—inert,  
And lacking noble form—the lumpish Clay.  
And to himself the Clay said “Trodden down,  
Here in abasement must I bear their scorn  
Who, glittering with a glory not their own,  
Boast of the accident of being born  
In lofty station? Fashion'd were we both  
Of the same substance, gender'd from the womb  
Of the same mother; and shall theirs, forsooth,  
Be all the glory, and all mine the gloom?  
'Twere better not to be, than to be thus,  
Earth's common footstool. Better not to live

Than to live under lorddom tyrannous,  
Strong to endure, but impotent to strive !  
Yet must I hide me, and my wrongs, away,  
Till strike mine hour. And strike it will. Mean-  
while,  
Patience, be thou my prophet ! " And the Clay  
Slunk from the sun's unsympathising smile,  
And roll'd himself into the river's bed,  
And there lay hidden.

Time pass'd. Man appear'd,  
And laid his hand on Nature. For his bread  
The glebe was harrow'd, and the forest clear'd.  
He turn'd, and tamed, the torrent to his will :  
Bridged the broad river, fell'd the flourishing oak :  
Groped in the granite bowels of the hill  
For hidden ore : and rent with flame and smoke  
The ribs of royal mountains. Down they came,  
Shorn by the saw, and measured by the rod,  
To build man's palaces, and bear his name  
Carved in their flesh. The earth had a new god.

## PART II.

Large was the chamber ; bathed with light serene  
And silence tuned, not troubled, by the sound  
Of one cool fountain tinkling in the green  
Of laurel groves that girt the porches round.

And in that chamber the sole dwellers were  
Ideas, clad in clear and stately shape ;  
Save one, a prisoner, huge, uncouth, and bare,  
Hung fast in fetters, hopeless of escape,  
And broken at the heart,—a Marble Block.

Even as a hero, in base ambuscade  
Fallen ; so, fall'n, and from his native rock  
Borne here in chains, the indignant Marble made  
No moan ; but round, in dumb remonstrance gazed ;

And, gazing, saw, surprised, all round him stand  
The images of gods. With right arm raised,  
Jove launch'd the thunders from his loaded hand :

A light of undulating lovelinesses,  
Rose foam-born Venus from the foam : and, dread  
With dismal beauty, by its serpent tresses

Did sworded Perseus lift Medusa's head :  
There paused a-tiptoe wing-capp'd Mercury :

Apollo, pensive smiling, linger'd here :  
There stately Pallas stood, with brooding eye,  
Full arm'd, and grasp'd the ægis and the spear.

A kindred instinct flash'd, a sudden glow  
Thrill'd, sparkling, through the Marble's crystal  
grain.

“Flesh of my flesh,” he cried, “I know you now,  
You stately statues ! and myself would fain  
Be also even as ye are.”—“After me !”

A mocking voice made answer from below.  
“Wretch !” laugh'd the lucid Marble, “after *thee* ?”  
For, not far off, he noticed, by a row

Of pitchers, huddled in a slimy trough,  
 The lumpish Clay. "Baseborn, how darest thou  
 show  
 Thy face in Beauty's sanctuary? Off!  
 Did not I banish thee when I" . . . "When thou  
 Thyself wast yet unbanisht, wouldst thou say?  
 True! in thy pride thou couldst not then foresee  
 The hour when *me* thou must perforce obey.  
 For thou *wilt* have to obey me."—"Obey *thee*?"  
 "Ay! grinding thy gnasht teeth against the fine  
 Keen flitting chisel, when thy nature stern  
 Must needs submit to serve each fluent line  
 My form imposes on it; that, in turn,  
 Thou mayst, by following me, be something."—"I!  
 I follow *thee*, wretch?"—"Ho! not broken yet  
 Is thy proud spirit? Patience! By and by  
 Thou, too, wilt need, as I have needed, it."

## PART III.

The Artist strode into the statued hall,  
 Up to the block; and, with pleased eyes perused  
 The Marble's snowy sides, slow measuring all  
 The length and breadth of them. The while he  
 mused,  
 Into the stone, with such intense regard,  
 His deep gaze dived, that in a mystic thrill  
 It felt his human eye, throughout its hard  
 And frozen bulk, with a creative will

Awakening beauteous forms in slumber claspt,  
Which heaved as tho' that will they half fore-  
knew.

Sudden, he stretch'd his searching hand, and  
grasp'd . . .

—Ah strange! 'Twas not the Chisel that now flew  
Dartlike, obedient to that aiming eye,  
Into the heart of the expectant stone.

His Thought plunged, kneading, in the trough hard by,  
And clods of viscous Clay, one after one,  
Thick on the table thump'd with clumsy thud :

There, grew together : wormlike writhing, rose  
Pliant to every touch : until the mud,

Gliding and glutinous, 'gan half disclose  
The thought that quicken'd it. Its impish speed

Was half, like Caliban, ungainly, half,  
Like Ariel, delicate, till Fancy freed

Her image struggling from it. With low laugh  
"Seest thou?" it lisp'd and mutter'd. "Seest thou?

Try

To follow *me* now ; and mine image take  
Upon thee. Which of us hath (I or thou)

The fine creative faculty to make  
Ideas first corporeal?" And, complete

In clay, a statue stood before the gaze  
Of the astonisht Marble.

Then, to eat

Slowly, and gnaw through all the intricate maze  
Of netted lines about his body thrown,

The griding chisel, with three-corner'd wedge,

Ground his keen tooth upon the spluttering stone  
 Which sprang and split in sparkles round the edge,  
 Driven by the dancing mallet. By degrees  
 The out-thrust throat and formidable face  
 Assume imperative purpose : fingers seize  
 And grasp the fluttering scroll with eager grace :  
 The deep eye darkens under beetling brows :  
 The half-uplifted arm begins to shake  
 The toga's massive fold, that backward flows :  
 And the stretcht finger points. What words awake  
 Upon those quivering lips? What thunder-speech  
 Upheaves the fierce Democracy, and breaks  
 The power of pale Patricians cowering each  
 From that curl'd lip? For lo, THE TRIBUNE  
 speaks!  
 The Tribune? O proud Marble, royal born,  
 Thou the coarse organ of the Demos? thou!  
 "Art thou enough humiliated, Seorn?  
 Pride, is thy loftiness at last brought low?"  
 The base material, to the nobler one  
 Form'd after its own image, sneer'd. "By Me,  
 And after me! 'Tis thus, and thus alone,  
 That, proud one, thou henceforth hast leave to be."

But the pure Marble, in the image clothed  
 Of a new power, still conscious to the last  
 Of all his ancient force, made answer "Loathed  
 Abortive botch! A granted garb thou hast,  
 But think not thou art safe in it. 'By thee?'  
*Through* thee, say rather : who hast now made known



Undream'd of means, and mightier ones, to me

Of being above thee. Look, fool, on thine own  
Futile and perishable frame. Behold !

Already runs the gaping fissure straight  
From head to heel. For all thy boasting bold,  
Thy tottering limbs can scarce support the weight  
Of thy flaw'd body ; and thy flimsy flesh

Hastily put together, may not long  
Uphold thy silly head. Some crevice fresh  
Is daily widening those loose clods among.

Drunk with the fancied triumph of a day,  
Thou staggerest. Me, superior still, thou must  
Invoke to represent thee. Baseborn Clay,  
Slave of the immortal Marble, sink—in dust !”

## XXXII.

## A PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

“ Ich unglücksel'ger Atlas ! ” — HEINRICH HEINE.\*

'Twas the lot of a cork in a bottle,  
    (Who, bound with wire, and wound with twine,  
Was a prisoner himself, held fast by the throttle)  
    To imprison a generous wine.  
And oh, proud, how proud of his lot was he,  
The oppressor of that strong spirit to be!  
But alas for the chances of power,  
    And the ups and dows of a ruler's life !  
For once, in a festal hour,  
    Somebody suddenly seizing a knife,  
(This happen'd on board of a ship at sea)  
    Cut asunder the bonds which till then had held fast  
    That cork to his boasted place. Then at last  
The fiery force in the flask, set free  
And upshooting a foamy fountain, tost  
    The bung from the bottle, and overboard.

\* Me miserable Atlas !

And thus was his proud supremacy lost,  
When sustain'd no longer by steel and cord.

“Revolution !” that was the cork’s first word,  
As splash ! he fell on his flimsy pate.

“Such another the universe never will see.

What a greatness there is in the fall of the great !

O what an uprising—and all against *me* !

And, ye gods ! what a strength was mine, so long  
To have held in subjection a spirit so strong !”

Whilst thus he was speaking, o’er him descended

(Taking him suddenly captive again)

A broken kettle, too bad to be mended,

Which the ship’s cook happen’d to pitch just then

Out of the cabin-window. It fell

Inclosing the cork like a diving-bell ;

And souse, together both cork and can

Sunk to the bed of the ocean.

There, in the dismal abyss, through chasms

Of the scoriac crust of the dædal earth,

The central fire with volcanic spasms

Was hurling upward in monstrous mirth

Mighty masses of burning stone.

“Thou, too, O Earth,” cried the cork with a groan,

“Art overwhelm’d by rebellious powers

Jealous of majesty mighty as ours !

Well, such is the fate, as it seems of the great

In these bad times, my Royal Brother !

There is something wrong in the universe.

I myself, as thou seest, have suffer’d reverse.

One fallen grandeur can feel for another.”

Meanwhile, that irruption submarine  
Was belching granite into the brine ;  
And the split stones, tumbling heavy and hot,  
Buried beneath them cork and pot.

The former his inborn levity,

And natural disposition to keep  
On the surface (being restrain'd thereby)

Made ill at ease in his dungeon deep.  
And he said, with a self-compassionate sigh,  
" The last of the Titan race am I,  
Titanic sufferer ! Envious Fate,  
Of how heavy a world of woes thy hate,  
Hath made me Atlas ! " That dark Power  
Whose unseen finger fashions the hour,  
And guides blind Chance to her destined work,  
Heard this complaint of the querulous cork ;  
And, smiling a secret smile of contempt,

Scatter'd the stones that imprison'd him :  
Who, as soon as he found himself thus exempt

From external pressure, up thro' the dim  
Vague and voluminous element  
Wavering back to the surface went.

There did the light-headed loiterer roll  
From ripple to ripple, without a goal ;  
Vacant of power and purpose too ;  
Drifting, shifting, with nothing in view.  
Hither and thither the waters drew him :  
This way, that way, the breezes blew him :  
Fishes snapp'd at him now and then,  
Half-swallow'd and spat him out again :

Whilst, restored to his own inherent want  
Of stability, ever he lightly glided  
(As wave and wind were predominant)  
On the course by his chance—not choice—decided.

O Atlas ! what of thy Titan doom,  
Thine ocean-shroud, and thy mountain-tomb ?  
Flimsy fragment of fungus stuff,  
Too flimsy to perish, drift on still !  
For in thee is not even weight enough  
To dive, and be drown'd, of thine own free will.

## XXXIII.

## V A L O U R.

## 1.

For free discussion of affairs of state

The Beasts a public meeting held : and there

'Twas sad to hear how things had lapsed of late

From bad to worse, and so degenerate were  
That now the greatest rascals were the great.

In fact the talk was such as everywhere,  
Is heard at public meetings nowadays,  
Where those who give most censure get most praise.

## 2.

An Ape, much cheer'd (he chatter'd like a man)

Denounced the weakness of the government.

"Where shall we find true valour?" he began.

"Not in the craven crew we are content  
To call our leaders. Let him lead who can !

Old kingdoms tempt new conquerors. Prevent  
The impending ruin of this empire old !  
Tho' big, the brutes that lead us are not bold.

## 3.

“Or only bold to weaker beasts are they.

There is not one of them (and that they know)  
Who never yet was forced to slink away,

Avoiding fight with some superior foe.  
But as for that, what need of leaders, pray?

Since turning tail’s a trick we all can do.  
True Valour flies not, tho’ the foe be strong,  
Nor works, by force or fraud, another’s wrong;

## 4.

“True Valour neither seeks nor shuns to fight.

Be his the royal crown, and his alone,  
In whom true Valour doth those gifts unite  
Which guard a nation and endear a throne!”

The meeting would have echo’d with delight  
The Ape’s discourse if, ere the Ape was done,  
The Lion had not suddenly appear’d;  
Whose presence was impressive, tho’ uncheer’d.

## 5.

He rose, and round him roll’d a regnant eye;

Calmly contemptuous was his ample brow;  
And “What is it ye want?” he said. “If I,

The Lion, be not valorous enow,  
Where’s he, so valorous, that he dares defy  
My power, forsooth unprized, I fain would know?

Is not my presence fear'd by those ye fear?  
 What more protection need ye? I am here.

## 6.

"Peace, babbling mouths! Not mine the fault, but  
 theirs,  
 If, trusting neither in themselves nor me,  
 Those poor poltroons, quails, pigeons, rabbits, hares,  
 In panic flight too soon from danger flee.  
 The foe that slays the coward unawares  
 Is his own coward heart's timidity.  
 Whose presence have I ever shunn'd? or who  
 Hath seen me shrink, or" . . . "Cock-a-doodle-do!"

## 7.

And "Doodle-do!" again the red Cock cried.\*  
 The Lion, with disgust beyond control,  
 Shrugg'd his huge mane—shrank—falter'd—turn'd  
 aside,  
 That vulgar voice, impertinently droll,  
 Offensive to his taste as to his pride,  
 Set smarting in his sensitive strong soul  
 A secret nerve that found there no defence  
 From the coarse touch of clumsy insolence.

\* It is an old popular belief that the lion cannot bear the crow of the cock. Schiller alludes to it in his *Wallensteins Lager*. The sergeant says of the great Friedlander—

" . . . When the cock crows he starts thereat."

To which the Jäger replies—

He's one and the same with the lion in that."



## 8.

“There goes the bravest of the brave ! put out,  
Crow’d down !” the bald Ape jabber’d to the crowd.  
The Bull, scarce knowing what ’twas all about,  
With sullen stare half stupid and half proud  
Had seen the dunghill bird, and heard him shout,  
Heedless : but, while the hubbub wax’d more loud,  
Close in the ear of him a crafty Crow  
Cried, “Seize the moment, ere the moment go !

## 9.

“The throne is vacant. Claim and take it, thou !  
Address the people !” urged the black-robed bird.  
“Or let me be thine orator. I know  
The habits and the humours of the Herd.”  
Then round the field he flew ; to high and low  
Persuasive spake, and counsell’d all who heard  
To choose a bovine king. “For see,” he said,  
“What simple tastes, and what a solid head !

## 10.

“Mark, too, how great a following is his !  
Whose Party follows him where’er he goes.  
What confidence ! and how deserved it is !  
On party strength well-balanced States repose.  
And how respectable a party this !  
Republics only ripen public woes

To fatten despots. But can aught surpass  
Sound Bourgeois Rule, with bellyfuls of grass?"

## 11.

These words the opinion of the public win.

The cautious Stag, persuaded, plumps his vote :  
The Stallion's high-bred ear at once takes in

What takes in *him* too : the gregarious Goat  
And ruminating Ram their numerous kin

Lead to the poll ; and each loud-bleating throat  
Proclaims invested with supreme authority  
The Bull, by right of popular majority.

## 12.

The Fox mark'd this with ill-contented mind.

He and the Crow are rivals in their trade ;  
Attorneys both of pettifogging kind.

Hovering about the Herd, the Crow hath made  
From what its foolish followers drop behind

A pretty profit ; by no means afraid  
To pick from nastiness appropriate food.  
Nothing's too nasty to do some one good.

## 13.

Quite otherwise is Lawyer Reynard's way.

Respectable and prosperous corporations  
He hates and shuns ; seeks geese that go astray ;  
Haunts backyards favouring nightly visitations ;

Estates ill-managed, fortunes in decay,  
These are his interests, these his occupations.  
Sound bourgeois rule he cannot bear at all :  
Reynard's romantic and a radical.

## 14.

"Fine doings!" mused he, "curse that prattling Crow!  
A sovereign ox, with corvine ministers?  
Not yet, good people, are we sunk so low  
If I can help it! Patience, civic sirs!  
Better the Lion! He at least knew how  
To treat affairs as only grand seigneurs  
Are able,—on a large and liberal scale,  
Not stooping to contemptible detail.

## 15.

"He knew the world, and took it as it is,  
Nor ask'd five legs of mutton from a sheep.  
Unpinn'd to prim respectabilities,  
Thro' many an awkward case he's let me creep,  
And stopp'd the cackle of accusing geese;  
Quashing the trial with a sovran sweep  
Of his capacious and imperial paw.  
A king was he, whose kingly word was law!

## 16.

"Nor cared he for a wee mouse more or less.  
In battle, we shall ne'er behold his peer.

He wanted parliamentary address,  
And that's a pity ; could not bear, 'tis clear,  
The slightest interruption. Who would guess  
The voice of any vulgar chanticleer  
Could crow him down ? Well, he and I were  
cronies,  
But *his* day's done now. *Fuimus leones !*

## 17.

"As for the Bull, well know I where to find  
The heel of that Achilles ! Wait awhile,  
And then you'll see the dance begin ! What kind  
Of cant is this that fills my veins with bile,  
Of royal power with civic rights combined ?  
Preach it to fleas, and bugs, and such *canaille* !  
True Valour claims no corporation-clause,  
But stands complete upon its own four paws."

## 18.

Thus musing, Master Reynard slipp'd away  
By devious by-paths to a secret lair  
Where many a plot he had been wont to lay.  
There now the rascal crouch'd and sniff'd the air  
Till what he sought he found ;—a certain gay  
And greedy Gadfly, buzzing here and there  
About a heap of carrion slyly stow'd  
By paws felonious in that dark abode.

## 19.

“ ’Tis well to have a friend in every class,  
And now and then be civil to small fry,”  
The rogue laugh’d, lolling in the long dry grass ;  
And, having whisper’d to her, watch’d the Fly  
With zealous hum about his business pass.  
Then, sure of the result, indifferently  
He saunter’d after to the grazing ground,  
And, like a casual lounge, look’d around.

## 20.

The Crow, meanwhile, with a triumphant caw,  
Was leading up the loyal deputation  
Charged to present the crown, expound the law,  
And hail the elected monarch of the nation.  
The Bull, with unconcern his subjects saw,  
But, graciously accepting their ovation,  
Stoop’d, to receive the crown, his stolid head ;  
When lo ! he shook, he shrank, he turn’d, he fled.

## 21.

He fled ! his eye, bewilder’d, sought all round  
Some unseen formidable foe : he fled  
Just in the crowning moment : fled uncrown’d :  
Without the least word of dismissal said  
To his amazed admirers. On the ground  
Stamping, and butting with an aimless head,

Off scamper'd, with him, all his Party too.  
Tho' why, or where, not one of them quite knew.

## 22.

"There goes the second of the Sons of Fame!"  
The scall'd Ape snicker'd to the gaping crowd.  
"Did not I tell you? they are all the same!  
Like this Goliath by a Gadfly cow'd,  
A swarm of Bees Sir Bruin overcame.  
Each hath his master, look he ne'er so proud.  
Again I ask—look round you left and right,  
Where is the chief incapable of flight?"

## 23.

"I know the chief that never fled; and know,  
Where now he dwells, the bravest of the brave!"  
This voice came, sudden, from a wither'd bough  
Where perch'd in pomp a Parrot grey and grave.  
Much had he travell'd; much with high and low  
Had mix'd; and learn'd the world; and seem'd to  
have  
In every land where he had been a ranger  
The world's respect: half citizen, half stranger.

## 24.

Schlom he spake. Much given to thought he seem'd.  
No public office had he ever held;

But, when he oped his beak, all listeners deem'd

That they had heard an oracle of eld.

Sedate his mien ; and all his language teem'd

With sage enigmas : none its meaning spell'd :

All praised it more for that. So judgments go.

*Omne ignotum pro magifico !*

## 25.

Yet was this Parrot (the plain truth to own)

At bottom an impostor, rake, and knave ;

Who in himself had selfishly lived down

That love of freedom born in bosoms brave ;

Which he regarded as the cause and crown

Of all the ills that mortal life enslave.

“ For what’s life worth,” he thought, “ if day by day

The worth of life wear life itself away ?

## 26.

“ The tree that’s not contented to be wood

Doth all its strength to its own damage put,

In bringing forth what brings the tree no good ;

Since others pluck the apple and the nut,

And each fool’s toil but turns him into food

For other mouths, whose greed its gettings glut.

Why plague one’s soul, a plaguy world to please ?

Life’s only fruit worth growing is life’s ease.

## 27.

“*Per Bacco !*” (he had been in Italy)

“Give me the golden cage that I can quit  
 Whene’er I will because men know that I,  
 No fool, am sure to turn again to it !  
*Caramba !*” (and in Spain) “where’er I fly  
 I find but folk that seem for Bedlam fit.  
*Oh, que les bêtes sont bêtes !*” (and he had been  
 In France, where things worth seeing he had seen :

## 28.

Republics one and indivisible,

But more than one, and all divided ; ending  
 In master-strokes of state, whereby they fell ;  
 And empires that were peace, on war depending ;  
 And constitutions that for shot and shell  
 Were constituted marks, when past all mending ;  
 Cooks, captains, orators, mobs, proclamations,  
 And demi-worlds for demi-reputations).

## 29.

“*Oh, que les bêtes sont bêtes !*” ’Tis pitiable !

Cannot they see how easily mankind  
 May be enslaved by any beast that’s able,  
 With just a show of serving men, to bind  
 Men to its bestial service ? Stall and stable  
 Where cow and horse their cared-for comfort find,



What beast but man would build for horse and cow ?  
Or in their service sweat his boasted brow ?

## 30.

“ And all for what ? a little milk from one ;  
Or leave the other’s body to bestride,  
Who in man’s seeming service (which is none)  
Doth only what his pleasure ’tis, and pride,  
To do when free—trot, gallop, leap, and run !  
For me, the fools a glittering house provide,  
That’s finer than their own, a dome of gold,  
Because I call them bitter names, and scold !

## 31.

“ *Cospetto!* and what brainless brutes be these  
Who seek a master simply to be free !  
When they might get them, if they did but please,  
A servant, whose sole business it would be  
To emancipate them from the miseries  
Of freedom !” Perch’d upon his wither’d tree  
Whilst thus the Parrot mused, the Beasts below him  
Roar’d, “ Lead us to our leader ! name him ! show  
him !”

## 32.

“ He !” the grey mocker slowly made reply,  
“ The bravest of the brave, whose name ye ask,

Retired he dwells, in that obscurity

Which oftentimes wraps the unrequited task  
True Merit ever is content to ply.

For Fame is but a hollow-sounding mask  
Which to the crowd reëchoes its own voice,  
And thence comes praise or blame, by chance, not  
choice.

## 33

“ Retired he dwells : remote, serene, alone :

Firm as the far-off rock where he abides :  
Calm, tho’ around him stormy waters roll :

No base ambition in his soul resides :  
By force or fraud, he wrongs not any one :

Yet never, never, whatsoe’er betides,  
Doth flinch a hair’s-breadth from the fiercest foe.”  
“ Long live our leader ! ” roar’d the Beasts below.

## 34.

“ His name ! his name ! ” The Parrot from the tree

Perch’d on whose blighted bough he sat sedate  
With curious scrutiny observed the glee

Of those beneath him ; slowly scratch’d his pate ;  
Rough’d all his feathers ; seemed, awhile, to be

O’erwhelm’d in thought profound, deliberate  
As one who weighs each word against objection ;  
Then answer’d, with emphatic circumspection,

## 35.

“Are ye resolved (think once and twice again !)  
To test true valour by the trial set  
To those whose vaunted valour ye disdain,  
And hold him bravest of the brave, who yet  
By force, or fraud, hath never spoil’d, or slain,  
Another ; but whom never foeman, met  
In fiercest fight, hath ever forced to flee ?”  
“Speak to the point !” the crowd cried. “Who is  
he ?

## 36.

“Name him ! where is he ? question us no more !  
’Tis thee we question. Give us plain replies.  
He, only he, is worthy to reign o’er  
Those who to Valour have decreed the prize !”  
The rest was one enthusiastic roar.  
A twinkle glitter’d in the wily eyes  
Of that grey trifier, whilst for prudent flight  
He spread his wings, and scream’d, with grim delight,

## 37.

“Ridiculous and cowardly *canaille* !  
Who jeer and flout the fine infirmities  
Of noble minds ! whose natures mean and vile  
The Lion’s courage, the Bull’s strength despise,  
And sneer at all ye cannot reconcile  
With trite decorums ! who can claim your prize ?  
No creature ever known to run or royster.  
Ye bid me name your chief ? I name the Oyster !”

## X X X I V.

## PAIN.

## 1.

SATAN, the Prince of Pain, whose rebel wing  
Creation cages under golden bars,  
Wander'd his world-wide penthouse, hovering  
Among the mazy courses of the stars,  
And mock'd the music of the spheres : " Beat time  
To the dull march of Matter's doom'd routine,  
Mechanics of Creation ! ye are mine,  
Tho' me you praise not with your patient chime."

## 2.

Fierce cries of anguish mixt with shouts of mirth  
Rose as he spake. The Rebel Angel laugh'd  
" I know that music. 'Tis the babbling Earth  
Still to mine ears the self-same song doth waft.  
Old is each note of it. Complaints and curses !  
Murder and robbery in all forms of life,  
And dust, for dust, with dust in endless strife ;  
Princes for provinces, and pads for purses !

## 3.

“Creatures of crocodile-creating clay,  
Think ye your croaking, or your crunching, worth  
Satanic intervention? Have your way,  
You self-made victims of the vulgar Earth !  
But long live Love, in whose light air-balloon  
Faith soars to heaven, self-confident and vain,  
And falls with broken limbs to earth again,  
Cursing her madcap voyage to the moon !

## 4.

“The good old classic music ! Passion quench’d  
In hissing tears. Fond greed of fancied gain  
That sinks in sight of port. The fist fierce-clench’d  
That strikes the despot brow it served in vain.  
Thought’s shamed confession ‘Unattainable !’  
Affection’s lamentation ‘Lost !’ Hope’s moan  
‘Defeated !’ Effort’s deathery ‘Overthrown !’  
Well done, ye faithful servitors of Hell !

## 5.

“I recognise your work, and give it praise.”  
And the Dark Spirit smiled. But suddenly  
Was wafted to him, from within that maze  
Of miserable sounds, a single sigh ;  
So faint, it scarce divided the next air  
More than a silence ; yet of such strange pain

As waked the past in Satan's soul again,  
And thrill'd with memory his immense despair.

## 6.

He, spreading sullen pinions, earthward bent  
Swift flight ; to find the archer whose strong bow  
The torment of its venom'd shaft had sent  
Into such endless distances of woe.  
There, scarce perceptible, the Fiend perceived  
A little saucy Imp, whose fingers fine  
Held with affected languor feminine  
A bunch of fresh-blown roses, dewy-leaved.

## 7.

And from this posy now and then he took  
A single rose ; and with a playful smile  
Leaflet from leaflet lightly loosening, shook  
The petals o'er a wretch who all the while  
Writhed under each in agony. That small  
Tormentor seem'd to sniff with keen delight  
Some gust of suffering made more exquisite  
By every fragrant rose-leaf he let fall.

## 8.

" 'Twas thou then ? "—" Mighty Master, it was I."  
" What new atrocity of torturing  
Hast thou invented, Imp of Hell ? That sigh  
Which made me shudder, even me thy king,

How hast thou wrung it from a human heart?

What was thy weapon? scorpions seethed in flame?

Or fangs of adders? Name me, Imp, its name,

And show me how 'tis shaped, thy devilish dart."

## 9.

The little plump-cheek'd cherub of the pit

(A kid among the goats, with budding horn)

Falter'd—"Dread Lord, I know no name for it.

Soft are my roses, and without a thorn."

"Why thus, then, dost thou strew them?"—"Pardon me,"

The Hell-whelp whined, "this man hath suffer'd so!"

"Ha, fool! and thou dost pity him? Go, go,

And learn mankind. Thou art a child, I see."

## 10.

Blushing resentful, "Prince," the Imp replied,

"What dost thou take me for? 'Tis true my brothers

Are bigger, but" (and this he lisp'd with pride)

"I scorn their clumsy practice. How those others  
Fatigue themselves in torturing mankind, &

Get out of breath in running down their prey! /

My work, if easier, is more refined,

Look at this wretch's wounds. How fresh are they!

## 11.

“ From men he got them, Master, not from me.

Yet each hath been a master-stroke I swear.

Which, but that *one by one* he got them, he

Had surely not had strength enough to bear.

Man’s work, yet perfect ! Hate without remorse :

Deep thought : deliberate purpose : patient skill :

Oh, naught was wanting to each human will

That stabb’d here ! How could this man’s wounds be  
worse ?

## 12.

“ I merely keep them open. Toucht again,

Tho’ ne’er so lightly, each one burns and gapes.

A rose-leaf does it. By disguised disdain

That friendship’s frank commiseration apes,

Men taught me this. The trick is simple, see !

Yet ’neath such touches strongest spirits wince.”

“ Away ! away ! ” cried Hell’s impatient Prince ;

“ Release yon sufferer, leave his soul to me.”

## 13.

The chidden Imp, reluctant, left his prey,

Like a chased fly. Man’s arch accuser stood

Contèmplating man’s victim. Silent lay

The wretch, unconscious of worse neighbourhood

Than he had felt before. In that soul’s curse

The gaze of Satan, piercing, could detect



How heart and brain met shatter'd to reflect  
In a flaw'd mirror a warp'd universe.

## 14.

“And thou hast suffer'd greatly?” musing said  
The Prince of Pain. The sufferer slowly raised  
The heavy burthen of a hopeless head,  
And, 'neath a half-uplifted eyelid, gazed  
Upon the Rebel Angel's ruin'd brow,  
And recognised Hell's Anarch, and replied  
Indifferently, with neither shame nor pride,  
Unto the voice of Satan, “Even as thou.”

## 15.

“Then 'twas too much,” mutter'd the Fiend. “I own  
No peer in torment; and I scorn to share  
With human brows my solitary crown.  
Soul,—whom man's hate hath forced mine own to  
spare,  
Lest at the last extremity his prey  
Should prove in aught my rival,—rest!” And  
slow,  
With wistful gesture, from that human woe  
Satan, half-sighing, turn'd, and fled away.

## XXXV.

## QUESTIONABLE CONSOLATION.

## 1.

A BUTTERFLY (and had the wretch been born  
With all the beauties that, at best, adorn

A butterfly's complete perfection, still  
He but a butterfly had been, at best)  
Came into life a cripple ; dispossess

Of half his natural features ; born i' the chill,  
Blemisht, and misbegotten ; an abortion  
Doom'd from the birth to suffering and distortion.

## 2.

One wing unfinisht, and misshapen one :  
Six legs he had, but of his six legs none

That served the purpose for which legs are made :  
The piteous pivot of his own distress,  
Aye with self-torturing unsteadiness

About himself he turn'd ; and found no aid  
In aught that life vouchsafed him, leg or wing,  
To life's attainment of one wisht-for thing.

## 3.

He saw the others hovering in the sun ;  
He saw them seek each other ; saw them shun  
Each other, by each other to be sought ;  
He saw them (each, itself, a second flower)  
On flowers, entranced by the transcendent power  
Of their own happiness ; he saw them, fraught  
With frolic rapture, fearless wantons all !  
And saw himself, unable even to crawl.

## 4.

“ And I,” he thought, “ I too, was meant to be  
A wingèd joy, a wandering ecstasy !  
Ah, must I envy, for his happier lot,  
The wingless worm that hath, complete, whate’er  
As worm he wants ; who wants no more, to fare  
Thro’ life content ; by life defrauded not  
Of what mere life makes capable of joy  
Even in a worm ? still happier far than I !

## 5.

“ I, to whom life refuses all things ! all  
Life’s joy in earth, air, water ! Still too tall  
The tiniest stem that bears the lowliest flower  
For me to climb ! too rough air’s lightest sigh  
For me to ride ! the nearest dewdrop, dry  
Ere I can reach it ! All, beyond my power !

All, save to disappear—go down—go by—  
Sink out of life, not having lived—and die !”

## 6.

The dying sun the insect's dying moan  
O'erheard, and answer'd from his falling throne,  
“Mourn not ! I even, I, the sun, go down,  
Sink, and drop into darkness. Look at me !”  
—He sinks. In pompous purple, pillows he,  
His kingly forehead, girt with golden crown,  
And, slowly, with delight his gaze grows dim,  
Seeing earth's sadness for the loss of him.

## 7.

Delicious homage of a dear dismay  
Paid to the happy, when they pass away,  
By grief not theirs ! Beneath him, prostrate, lies  
A world that worships him ; and everywhere  
Therein he finds some record rich and fair  
Of his own power. He sinks : and wistful eyes  
His pathway follow to its glorious bourn.  
He sinks : and longing voices sigh “Return !”

## 8.

He passes : but he hath not pass'd in vain.  
He passes, proving by life's loss its gain,  
And bearing with him what he leaves behind.  
He goes : rejoicing, “All that I have given

Memory makes mine again, and makes it even  
Mine more completely than before. I shined  
Rising and setting. All my light was shown,  
And all my force was felt." Thus suns go down.

## 9.

The boastful orb's last glories, lingering,  
That cripple smote. "Go, glories! tell your king,"  
Smiling he said, "go, him that sent you tell,  
Not all so wretched as I deem'd was I.  
Since I have seen how suns go down, thereby  
School'd have I been to know, and value well,  
What they, the happy,—they that have it not,—  
Would fain filch even from a wretch's lot,

## 10.

"The grandeur of its utter desolation."  
All glowing with rebuke and shamed vexation  
The braggart sun's resentful blushes burst,  
As o'er the deep, whose surface, and no more,  
His glory gilt, he, slowly sinking, bore  
This knowledge gain'd: that Misery at her worst  
Hath one poor grace of tragic interest  
Proud Pleasure vainly envies at his best.

## XXXVI.

## FORGIVE AND FORGET.

## 1.

“FORGIVE ! forget ! In haste I spoke.  
My speech was rash. Resent it not.  
Their words unwill’d my lips revoke.  
Stretch out thy hand. Be all forgot.”  
But stunn’d, and still’d, the listener stood.  
From stricken heart to sullen brain  
Rebounding beat the insurgent blood,  
Then clogg’d the gates of life again.

## 2.

Those rosy roads where tranquil Thought  
And Feeling once, like merchant peers,  
Embracing mix’d the treasures brought  
From their harmonious hemispheres ;  
In these, Resentment, outraged Pride,  
Wrong’d Honour, Wrath, and rebel Doubt  
Now strove, with forces wandering wide,  
From Reason’s stately ranks thrown out.

## 3.

“ ‘Forgive ? Forget ?’ ’Tis lightly said,”  
The sullen answer came at last  
Half-crusht, as thro’ the spikes it sped  
Of Pride’s portcullis—teeth shut fast.  
“ ‘Forgive ! forget !’ And in my place,  
Say what wouldst thou, the wronger, do ?”  
“ I swear it, as I hope for grace,  
I would forgive, forgetting too !

## 4.

“ And oh that in thy place I were,  
The wronger thou, and mine the wrong !  
Nay, hold me to the oath I swear,  
And try me if it hold not strong.”  
“ Man, words are hasty : even so  
Thyself hast said.”—“ Not hasty this !  
O trust it ! try it ! ask or do  
Whate’er thou wilt.”—“ *Thou* will’st it ?”—“ Yes.”

## 5.

A blow . . . and he that spake the last  
Beneath the bank where they two stood  
Was rolling wrapt in foam, and fast  
Borne onward by the boisterous flood.  
He beats the blinding wave with strength :  
Chill’d, shaking, aching, drench’d, to shore

He struggles : climbs the bank at length :  
And feebly feels alive once more.

## 6.

“ Forgive ! forget ! I struck in haste.  
My blow was rash. Resent it not.  
Is wrong forgiven not wrong effaced ?  
Stretch out thy hand. Be all forgot.”  
In wrathful mood he turn’d about,  
Remember’d—realised—forgave—  
And, with a rueful smile, held out  
His right hand dripping from the wave.

## 7.

“ Nay, overhasty still ! First dry  
Yon chilly drench that drips amain,  
For who would care to embrace (not I !)  
A slobber’d gutter retching rain ?”  
“ Unjust !” he cried. “ Take witness, heaven,  
Struck, sicken’d, soak’d to a sop by thee,  
The shock, the shame, I have forgiven,  
Nor mine the fault if chill’d I be.

## 8.

“ My garments drip, my blood runs cold,  
My limbs are loosed, my lips are blue,  
And if I live till I grow old,  
’Twill be, methinks, no thanks to you.



I heed not how my hurts were got,  
I only know they hurt me yet ;  
But all, it seems, suffices not,  
*Half-drown'd, you'd have me still not wet !*"

## 9.

" 'Tis well ! Thou understand'st me now.  
I, too, can strive : I, too, can brave  
What Friendship feels from Friendship's blow :  
Can pluck my soul from out the wave  
Of overwhelming wrath and shame,  
Reach shore, and, shivering there (like thee)  
Embrace my friend. But not the same  
As Friendship was can Friendship be.

## 10.

" For lost to love, tho' love may last,  
Is all that love must needs forgive ;  
And, tho' forgot, the painful past  
Its prey forgets not. Maim'd we live.  
In memory's haunts a horror grows,  
That marks one unremember'd spot ;  
And still the hoary hemlock blows  
Where blows the blue forget-me-not."

## XXXVII.

## THE MOUNTAINS OF TIME.

THE rest that man runs after lures the wretch  
From every place where he at rest may be ;  
So that his legs are ever on the stretch,  
And not one moment of repose hath he.  
This frenzy is in certain folks so strong  
That, when they find the pavement of the city  
Where they walk up and down the whole day long  
Not rough enough, however hard and gritty,  
It is their wont, some once or twice a year,  
To slip away, as wild as hawk or merlin,  
From all that city folks hold justly dear  
In London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin,  
And seek out mountain places nature made  
On purpose for uncomfortable walking.  
To swell the number of these fools, I paid  
A visit to the Alps ; which, after stalking  
Thro' stony vales, I reach'd, and sought repose  
Fatiguingly a whole flea-bitten night,  
Outfidgeted in a chill Châlet, close  
By a green Glacier. There, before the light

I from bed's antisoporific rose,  
And set forth booted on my bootless road ;  
Wondering which first would wear the other out,  
The mountain or the boots that o'er it strode.  
But both the granite strong and leather stout  
Remain'd intact : and tho' to own it loth,  
'Tis I that was worn out between them both.  
And, when I reach'd the summit where I thought  
To pluck pure rapture, life's high alpine flower,  
Faint in the snow I stumbled, and besought  
My guide to let me sleep away the hour  
'Twas settled we must pass there. He replied  
" As *Monsieur* pleases : but make haste he must."  
" I'll sleep, then, in a hurry, friend," I sigh'd.  
The good man nodded : fish'd a cheese and crust  
Out of his wallet ; sat down at my side ;  
And munch'd his breakfast while his watch he kept.  
Dim round about me wink'd the prospect wide,  
Down sank my heavy eyelids, and I slept.

Or slept not ? That's the question. Sleep or waking,  
No change of scene across my vision came.  
The mountains, which I had erewhile been taking  
Such stupid pains to mount, with frozen frame  
Still clasp'd the picture which, of Fancy's making  
Or Nature's own, was round me, still the same.  
The only change (for which I can't account)  
Was that my sense of lassitude was gone,  
And force was mine to pass from mount to mount,  
For miles and miles, still upward and still on.

But what is certainly just now surprising  
Is that I felt not then the least surprise  
Either at this continual uprising  
And journeying onward, just as the bird flies,  
Or at the strange means of mine own devising  
I found within me (how, I can't surmise)  
Of getting, to my mute interrogation,  
From all those mountains, marvellous replies.

Much this discovery pleased me as a new one.  
And to a modest mamelary peak  
Which, tho' an Alp (a genuine and a true one)  
Yet, being milder-minded, so to speak,  
Of aspect than the rest (who seem'd to view one  
With countenances anything but meek)  
Inspired me with less awe than all his brothers,  
I said as much. "Ay," musingly quoth he,  
"The others speak not."—"Friend," said I, "what  
others?"  
"The other mountains," short he answer'd me.  
"What other mountains?" With a touch of mirth  
Sublime, he laugh'd "The mountains of the earth."  
"Pray, may I ask, then, of what kind they be,  
The mountains I've the honour of addressing?"  
"Certainly. Mountains, not of Space, are we,"  
He answer'd, "but of Time."—"Of Time?" confessing  
Imprudently mine ignorance, said I,  
"This is the first time I have ever heard  
That Time has mountains. Pray what are they made of?"  
As tho' he thought this question most absurd,

Mine Alp survey'd me sternly, icily ;  
 Then with a slight shrug I felt sore afraid of  
 Half loosed an avalanche, and grumbled " Pooh, man !  
 Are they not peers and kinsmen, Time and Space ?  
 And pray to Time, the peer of Space, do you, man,  
 Deny his rights, his mountains ?"—" Heaven forbid,  
 no ! "

I hasten'd to reply. " But, save Your Highness,  
 I know not (heartily I wish I did know !)  
 Nor can I " (here I stammer'd, seized with shyness)  
 " Imagine what they're made of. As for Space,  
 Why, all the earth affords to Space material  
 For mountain-making. But that's not the case  
 With Time, which is " . . . " What's Time ? " mock-  
 magisterial  
 Of mien, he interposed in accents quizzical,  
 " What's Time ? "

Now, tho' 'tis true I might have quoted  
 A dozen learned authors metaphysical  
 Who have . . . well, well, not wasted, but devoted  
 A deal of time to the consideration  
 Of what Time is,—yet (as with shame I noted)  
 Ere I had time to bring out one quotation,  
 Contemptuously looking down on me,  
 My questioner relieved the hesitation  
 His question caused me ; for " Whate'er Time be,"  
 He added, answering his own query, " Time,  
 Whose child am I . . . Tho', if I say I *am*,  
 Since naked truth's too freezingly sublime  
 I use, for your sake, a mere verbal sham :

For, truth to say, I'm nothing of the kind,  
And Time is nothing, and there's nothing true.  
But that's beyond the limits of your mind,  
And naturally bounded point of view.  
Oh, no offence, man ! Certes you'd not find  
Such terms offensive, if you only knew  
The advantage of those bounds ; wherein confined,  
Man's reason moves with accuracy thro'  
The crowded thoroughfares of sense, that wind  
In all directions up and down his brain.  
These bounds are paved off pathways which allow  
The poor foot-passenger, who else were slain,  
Keeping along the narrow tracks they show,  
To walk securely, and escape the train  
Of steeds and chariots that, fast speeding, flow  
And flash all round him, in a roaring tide  
Certain to crush him if he once broke thro'  
His pavement barriers upon either side.  
So, to the point. We here, who people Time,  
As bodies people Space,—the Hours are we.  
The Past upheaves us. Some of us, sublime,  
And others lowly, as no doubt you see.  
That's as Time makes us, of what men make *him*.  
I'm but the Hour of a small office clerk,  
Whose whole life was so quiet, dim, and prim,  
There's nothing in me to invite remark.  
The man who made what Time hath made of me  
Lived seventy years ; full fifty years of which  
He served the State. When just about to be  
Promoted to a post that was the pitch

Of his life's aim (tho' naught to boast of) he,  
 Poor devil, died an hour too soon. And thus  
 The mouse with which I am parturient  
 Remains within me, evermore, a *mus*  
*Nondum abortus*. His own fault, I grant.  
 But since your time is short, make much of us.  
 Seize the occasion. Ask whate'er you want.  
 Many a point remains yet to discuss.  
 Question the higher Hours."

I took the hint ;

And, having scarcely time to question Time,  
 Address'd a mount whose purple brows did print  
 The azure air with pines, that strove to climb  
 From cloud to cloud into the golden tint  
 That wrapp'd his summit from the rosy prime.  
 And "I," said he, "am, in a lover's life  
 The longest Hour. For ten impatient years  
 He, with relentless fortune, lived at strife.  
 At length love triumph'd over foes and fears.  
 And in a wood, where she had sworn to meet him,  
 The coming of his mistress did he wait,  
 While every rustling leaf conspired to cheat him,  
 Mocking her steps. She came—an hour too late.  
 And, in that hour, such doubts and such despairs  
 Convulsed his amorous imagination  
 That I became volcanic unawares,  
 And choking with internal conflagration,  
 As you perceive."

But I, the truth to say,  
 Perceived not even the slightest indication

Of fires internal in that mountain grey.  
Tho', after somewhat closer contemplation,  
I spied, 'tis true, a bare patch on his pate,  
Which some long empty crater might have been ;  
But I believe 'twas only baldness.

Straight

I turn'd me towards a giant glacier, green  
With hideous glooms. "What art thou?" I ex-  
claim'd.

"I," sigh'd the icy Horror, and his breath  
Froze the blood in me when his name he named,  
"Am the Last Hour of one condemn'd to death  
For having murder'd life. Look at me close.  
Throughout the Hour I am, one after one,  
All the lost moments of that man's life rose  
Up to the surface of his soul. Deeds done,  
Days undone, wild desires, and wicked wishes,  
Pure joys defiled, and faded memories fond.  
One after one they rose up like dead fishes  
To the sick surface of a poison'd pond.  
He, in this Hour a hundred times eternal,  
A child once more, the games of childhood play'd ;  
Felt on his brow the kiss of lips maternal ;  
A father's counsels heard and disobey'd ;  
Far, far away, by flowery paths infernal,  
From innocence, repose, and virtue stray'd ;  
Felt in his breast love's primal passion burning,  
The pang of jealousy's envenom'd dart,  
The shock of faith betray'd, the bitter turning  
Of love to hate, the ravage of the heart,



Despair, debauchery, destruction, crime,  
Conscience, and memory—the soul's last cry !  
Behold me. All the emptiness of Time,  
And all the wretchedness of Life, am I !”

Smitten with fear, I fled. Nor dared I deem  
My soul in safety till I 'scaped the sight  
Of that atrocious solitude. My dream  
Meanwhile pursued me till I reach'd a height  
Surpassing all the others. 'Twas so high  
That I perceived below me, far below,  
The tallest Alps no bigger to mine eye  
Than grains of salt. Naught breathed between the  
brow

Of this stupendous berg and the bare sky.  
Oh never yet with such a load of snow  
Was earth encumber'd ! “Here, at last,” said I,  
“Must be the Chimborazo, nothing less,  
Of human thought. For surely, surely, he  
Who raised to such a height the heaviness  
Of this all-else-surpassing pile must be  
Earth's master-mind. Time meets eternity,  
Stretch'd to this altitude.” Then loud I cried  
“O Atlas, Atlas ! tell me, who created  
Thy giant form ?” Long while no voice replied,  
And in the silence of the waste I waited  
Wondering, what bard had built this mighty epos :  
At length, a plaintive, sleepy whisper sigh'd  
“I am the weariest Hour yet known to fate,  
Pass'd by a schoolboy, in midsummer tide,

Condemn'd, for misdemeanours, to translate  
A dozen chapters of Cornelius Nepos."

Soon as that voice I heard, I seem'd to see  
And feel myself transform'd—evaporated,  
Then again frozen—and, at last, to be  
That mountain in wide azure isolated.  
Or, rather, seem'd that mountain part of me.  
For I remember'd that my life had dated  
Just such an hour. My soul became one yawn.  
My lassitude return'd. Again I stumbled  
And sank down, just where I had sunk at dawn,  
As faintly "*Alcibiades*," I mumbled,  
"*Cliniae filius, Atheniensis*" . . .

"Come, wake, sir! Time's up, and we've miles to  
make yet."

My guide's voice thus recall'd me to my senses.  
I rose, and rubb'd mine eyes ; and, scarce awake yet,  
Look'd round—and recognised them every one :  
The amorous and agèd Don-Juanic  
Volcano, with his bald head in the sun,  
Proud of his long-quench'd spritely spurts volcanic ;  
The mamelon in labour with its mouse ;  
The convict's frozen conscience ; that titanic  
Alp-upon-alp of taskwork tyrannous ;  
At whose sight, I sprang forward with a thrill  
Of anguish, trying vainly to complete  
My chapter of Cornelius Nepos still.  
The guide, in front, cried "Eh sir, mind your feet !

Nor look down yonder till we've turn'd the hill.

The tug's to come yet." In his winding-sheet

The convict glared upon me, grim and chill.

"How call you yonder glacier, my good man, eh?"

"Sir," said the guide, "we call it Le Condamné.

Mind where you step now."—"Yes," I murmur'd,

"yes,

*Atheniensis Alcibiades*" . . .

## XXXVIII.

## CONSERVATION OF FORCE.

## I.

A MUSICIAN once, in the twilight time,  
Musing sat by the instrument  
Whose keys knew how, with a kindred chime,  
To interpret to him what his musings meant.  
Then a picture, the man had seen that day  
And, because of its colour or composition,  
Had, deep in the soul of him, borne away,  
Unmiss'd, from its place in the Exhibition,  
Began to suffer a mystic change,  
And pass from the soul where its own lay pent  
On the wings of a melody wild and strange ;  
Which, as 'twere in a dream, his fingers went  
Wandering after, over the keys ;  
Whose notes were thus scatter'd, and then again blent  
Till the twilight was fill'd with the music of these.

## 2.

But when, like a wind from a land unknown,  
That comes and goes with a will of its own,  
The strain died out, and left, as it died,  
The throbbing silence unsatisfied,  
A friend of the player's who, listening, sat  
In that twilight chamber beside him, cried  
With a sigh, "Continue!" "Continue what?  
I have not been playing," the player replied,  
"But only thinking—ah, thinking? nay,  
But rather dreaming all thought away  
About a picture I saw to-day."  
"Strange!" said the other; "and whilst unto thee  
I was listening, just ere thy music faded,  
A poem impress'd itself on me,  
As clear as a picture freshly painted.  
Farewell, ere I lose it!" Then home went he,  
And wrote the poem to which that strain  
Had changed itself in the poet's brain.

## 3.

This poem another painter read;  
And it haunted that other painter's head,  
Till of it another picture he made;  
Which, like the first, was exhibited.

## 4.

When, after many a year was past,  
Those pictures twain were uphung at last  
Side by side on the self-same wall  
Of the same museum, they did not fall  
Into the arms of each other, the one  
Crying "My father!" the other "My son!"  
Tho' in line direct was their filiation.  
But, like two athletes, they struggled and fought  
Against each other without cessation.  
And men, taking part in the contest, brought  
Daily, to deepen it, fresh contestation.  
Critic and craftsman, with praise or blame,  
Choosing their side in the battle, became,  
These the passionate partisans  
Of the style of the earlier master; those  
Of the style of the later; until two clans  
Of disciples, two schools of art, arose,  
Which, in turn, put forth for the world's applause  
Masterpieces of different kinds;  
The unlike effects of a single cause,  
One force transmitted thro' many minds.

## 5.

For, tho' none of the critics of this was aware,  
And not even the craftsmen the secret knew,  
Yet all these pictures the offspring were  
Of a single picture—the first of the two.

## XXXIX.

## HOMERIDES.

## 1.

NATURE hath given the Stag a wondrous gift.  
Love, and the force that loving hearts doth lift  
To lofty courage by the sweet desire  
Of winning love, have with creative fire  
Gone to his burning brain, and thence burst out  
In that brave crest he proudly bears about.  
Thus, in love's complete beauty arm'd, he roams  
The gusty realms of passion, and becomes  
A living tempest ; with whate'er in storm  
Hath being—motion swift, majestic form,  
Strife, rapture, peril, and the pomp of power.  
Then, like the storm which hath its one wild hour  
And passes, he—his passion once subdued  
By surfeit fierce—returns to solitude.

## 2.

A Beetle, burrowing where a Stag had been,  
Humm'd " Ha, brave buck ! here hast thou left, I ween,

To me who live upon thy leavings, fine  
And fit material for a crown like thine !  
For I surmise, since matter's everywhere,  
That everything is matter. Maidens, fair  
And pure, I've seen, who stoop'd to pluck and place  
(Charm'd by the beauty of it and the grace)  
In that sweet haunt of the Hesperides,  
The guardian of whose hidden apples is  
Jealous Desire, some flow'ret haply fed  
On the foul scrapings of the cattle-shed :  
And, if such filth could into beauty bud,  
Beauty, thou art but metamorphosed mud !  
Eureka ! Here must the Stag's secret lie.  
Could I but catch it, doubtless also I  
Should get the grace to which my soul aspires,  
And sprout those horns the horn-mad world admires."

## 3.

With which intent, on what he found he fed ;  
Till gradually from his insect head  
The superfluity of matter there  
Oozed out in frontal ornaments that were  
Not all unlike the antlers of a stag.  
Then, quite contented, he began to brag,  
" A stag am I, and brave mine antlers be ! "

## 4.

And yet he was but a stag-beetle, he.



## MORAL.

The poet's form is to his followers known.

The poet's secret is the poet's own.

'Tis born and buried in the poet's soul :

Passion its prelude, solitude its goal.

## XL.

## POINTS DE VUE—POINT DE VUE.

## 1.

A DWELLER in a city of the plain,  
Bound on a journey to a mountain land,  
First pray'd a famous traveller to explain  
How best he might behold, and understand,  
The rumour'd wonders of that lofty region,  
For by report the name of them was legion.

## 2.

"There's but one way," the traveller replied,  
"Beneath the highest mountain of them all  
There lies a little town. Get there a guide :  
Then, rest not till you reach its summit tall.  
The ascent is difficult. I grant 'tis double—  
But it is also twice well worth—the trouble.

## 3.

"For by this means not only will you be  
Rewarded with an admirable view,

But 'tis, indeed, the *only* means to see

At one wide eyesweep, adequately true  
And comprehensive in its contemplation,  
The whole of that high land's configuration."

## 4.

Struck by the justice of his friend's advice,  
Which promised an incomparable sight,  
And full of ardour, on his enterprise

The man set forth. He reach'd the inn at night  
Commended by the traveller; went to bed,  
Slept well, waked early, rose, dress'd, breakfasted;

## 5.

And from the casement of his room could see

That mighty mountain clad in cloud and snow.  
The guide inform'd him that, to mount it, three

Good days 'twould take him; to descend it, two.  
But he before him had a fortnight's time,  
Nor need begin in haste that task sublime.

## 6.

So he resolved to make a first essay

By visiting the hills and slopes that lower,  
Lapping the flanks of that high mountain, lay

Like housetops huddled round a minster tower;  
This promenade was picturesque, and soon  
Completed in one pleasant afternoon.

## 7.

'Tis true the prospects it unfolded each  
One corner only of the picture show'd :  
But all the others he proposed to reach,  
One after one, by the same easy road,  
Encouragingly smooth for a beginner,  
The following days 'twixt breakfast-time and dinner.

## 8.

“For thus shall I have witness'd all,” he said,  
“In course of time ; and witness'd all without  
Foregoing for that purpose board or bed,  
And being thoroughly fatigued no doubt.”  
So said, so done ; and home again content,  
Having climb'd all those little hills, he went.

## 9.

Their various points of view had pleased him well ;  
Their slopes were wooded, and their tops were  
green :  
From each he saw across the neighbouring dell :  
But saw no further : for each crest had been  
In turn commanded by some other crest,  
Just high enough to overtop the rest.

## 10.

In silence did his travell'd friend receive  
The tale of those short journeys ; and replied

“ The charm of your excursion, I perceive,  
Lay in those little slopes that, every side,  
Shut out the distance ; hills climb’d yesterday  
Bounding to-morrow’s prospect all the way.

## 11.

“ With not more trouble, and in shorter time,  
You, following my counsel, would have seen  
The whole horizon’s airy orb sublime  
Reveal’d beyond each decorated screen  
Of those low mountains. For that summit tall  
Of which I told you doth surmount them all.

## 12.

“ I, in man’s thought, as ’twere a bird behold,  
Born to disport itself in space, with wing  
Unfetter’d by the wires, tho’ they be gold,  
Of any cage. Albeit I grant birds sing  
In cages. But that, doubtless, is a merit  
They from the freeborn songsters do inherit.

## 13.

“ And better, to my thinking, one high note  
Dropt by the soaring skylark from the sky  
Than all that’s warbled from a cageling’s throat.  
Minds are there, too, whose natural home is high ;  
One word they drop in passing is worth more  
Than tutor’d twitterers twitter by the score.”

## XLI.

## PYRRHONISM,

OR,

## THE HAUNTED HEN.

## 1.

A HEN, whom the bounty of Providence made  
A parent prolific, with motherly pride  
Every day a fresh egg in the henroost laid,  
Which to hatch into life she then patiently tried.  
But, whilst on those eggs she was brooding warm  
In a placid glow of parental pleasure,  
Chill was the change as she spied with alarm  
A Weasel, who watch'd her, aware of her treasure.  
And this Hen henceforth was so haunted by  
The chilly charm of that Weasel's eye,  
That, night by night, in her dreaming sleep  
It was ever the self-same dream she dream'd ;  
How, changed to a Weasel, she crept in the deep  
Of the dark to the henroost ; and, stealthily seem'd  
With the craft of a Weasel to suck and destroy  
Those eggs that, by day, were the poor fowl's joy.

## 2.

This double identity, made up of two—  
 Her waking and sleeping self—at last  
 The Hen's life into confusion threw,  
 And over it, daily and nightly, cast  
 The spell of a twofold trouble. By day  
 She lived in such dread of her midnight dream  
 That at length not an egg was she able to lay:  
 Yet this daily sterility did not redeem  
 From its nightly plague her spirit tormented,  
 When she, by the dream's transforming power,  
 Changed into a Weasel, was discontented  
 At finding no more any eggs to devour.

## 3.

“ Ah, had I,” she sigh'd, “ but the gift to forget,  
 I might hope to recapture lost happiness yet !  
 Then, by day, with a spirit unvext should I  
 Taste the soothing sweets of maternity,  
 Whilst the ravisher's raptures of cruel delight  
 Would be mine, with young victims to ruin, by night.  
 But alas ! as it is, I can neither enjoy  
 The rude libertine's lust, nor the love of the mother ;  
 Who, combining two selves that each other destroy,  
 Fail to realise either the one or the other ! ”

## MORAL.

So are we : who, both author and critic in one,  
Miss the comfort accorded to either alone.  
By alternate creative and critical powers  
Is our suffering identity sunder'd and torn :  
And the tooth of the critic that's in us devours  
Half the author's conceptions before they are born.



## XLII.

## THE MOUNTAIN AND THE MARSH.

## A REVERIE.

## 1.

Low natures cannot even forgive the good  
Another's greatness on their fate entails.  
'Twixt sea and land a granite Mountain stood,  
No further than a wounded bittern trails  
His broken wing, beyond a Swampy Flood  
Foul with green ooze. The inland-blowing gales  
That died upon his summit did bequeath  
A quiet climate to the land beneath.

## 2.

The gracious image of this Mountain slept  
Unruffled in the dark of that dull Meer ;  
Where rarely even a lazy ripple crept  
To bid the bulrush shake his languid spear

O'er livid streaks of stagnant scum, that kept  
The calm contour, with every outline clear,  
And all the colours of the portraiture,  
Tho' painted on a filthy surface, pure.

## 3.

But daily ever, when the sun was low,  
And, in a rosy reflex aureole,  
The guardian Mount's grey head began to glow,  
From out his marble-breasted body stole,  
And sidled, lingering to the lowland slow,  
What seem'd the Mountain's disembodied soul :  
A stealthy, shy, and solitary elf,  
The insubstantial semblance of himself.

## 4.

Over the fens it fared, where dreamy rows  
Of cattle farmward moved their wandering camp ;  
But scarce had reach'd the rivage, ere there rose  
Resentful challenge from that churlish Swamp ;  
Hoarse as the choral croak that overflows  
In gleaming eves of Spring the shallows damp,  
And reedy brinks, of their spawn-mantled bogs,  
From many thousand throats of querulous frogs :

“ Halt, vagabond ! halt where thou art !  
Nor insult with thy presence abhorr'd  
The floor of my palace. Depart,  
Silly slave of an insolent lord !

“ And thou, broad braggart, I pray  
    Invade not my virginal bed.  
Let the earth to thy foot give way,  
    And the heaven to thy horrible head :

“ Parade thine imperial mantle,  
    Which this lackey behind thee doth bear,  
Till it leaves not uncover'd a cantle  
    Of the subject world—elsewhere :

“ But sully not with it my fountain !  
    Queen am I in my realm : and thine,  
Tho' it prison the sun, proud mountain,  
    I allow not alliance with mine.”

## 5.

The gracious Mount, aware of his wrong'd worth,  
    Made generous answer in grave tones and sweet ;  
Around him gazing, east, west, south, and north,  
    With kingly calm that claim'd attention meet ;  
While that sick shrew spat her foul spittle forth  
    And in her own filth wallow'd at his feet.  
His voice was as the sighing of a breeze  
Born on the bosom of the boundless seas :

“ Friend, leave to the human race  
    The inhuman habit of war !  
To each in the world his place,  
    And we are whatever we are.  
To each his good and his ill :  
    And the ill of the good made mine  
Is that, doom'd to forever be still,  
    I must ever for motion pine.  
The bees and the butterflies  
    Hover over the blossom bells ;  
And the birds in the balmy skies,

And the feathery-sail'd seed-cells,  
They wander about ; and I,  
As I watch them, wish that I were  
A bee, or a butterfly,  
Or a little bird of the air !  
But to each in the world his place,  
And to every ill some good.  
Unto me my granite base,  
And to thee thy shelter'd flood.  
Yet O, how the spirit in me  
Is troubled when bound, alas,  
To this granite base, I see  
(As the pure winds over me pass)  
The leaflet leap on the tree,  
And the flow'ret nod in the grass,  
And the long grass wave on the lea,  
And the reed in the wan morass !  
And thou, too ? Dost thou not feel  
(When the sedge to the low wind sighs)  
Sweet tremors over thee steal,  
And a rapture of ripples arise ?  
Say, wouldst thou not follow the wind  
In a wave of wonder away,  
Were thy waters unconfined  
By their osier cradle grey ?  
The hungry ocean, hidden  
By me from the heedless land ;  
Which it leaps to devour, and, chidden,  
Falls back at my mute command :  
Fares it better than thou who, rockt  
By low-breathing winds, and fann'd  
To sleep, liest safely lockt  
In the hollow of earth's huge hand ?  
No ! it suffers the same effect,  
Only all on a vaster scale.  
And if thy small fleets unwreckt  
Are but blown by a baby gale,  
(Dead leaflets gaily speckt,  
With a spider's web for a sail)  
Whilst yonder (a floating fort)  
The battle-ship huge, that mocks

The enemy's bellowing port,  
Sinks shatter'd on surfy rocks.  
Who shelters thee, thankless Queen,  
Secure in thy small domain ?  
I, the friend of whose shade serene  
Thy churlish lips complain !  
I, the giant who stand between  
Thy rest and the roaring main ! ”

## 6.

The brave old Mount, by wounding weathers scarr'd,  
O'er the low-sunken, safely-shelter'd lea,  
Which his grey head from howling gusts did guard,  
And o'er the rolling ridges of the sea,  
Sent far his grave, calm, satisfied regard ;  
Then glanced athwart that gloomy Swamp, but she  
Sigh'd only, sullen, from her sedgy beach,  
As, smiling, he resumed, in mountain-speech :

“ O rapturous, wandering wings,  
O rivulets, running for ever,  
O winds, clouds, waves, happy things !  
I, that never may follow you, never  
Taste with you a traveller's bliss,  
As ye roam over moorland and meadow,  
I, at least (and who grudges me this ?)  
Send forth on his travels my Shadow.  
'Tis a gentle and timorous sprite,  
That never, except when night  
Is falling, ventures far ;  
And, albeit inquisitive, most  
Discreet ; not given to boast,  
As other travellers are ;  
Pure, tho' it sleep in the slime ;  
Shy as a young bird thrown  
Unfledged from its nest sublime ;  
Yet with secret joys of its own ;

And by only two at a time  
 Is its intimate sweetness known.  
 But of any two lovers, I pray,  
 Be it ask'd if they love not the shade :  
 And the happy ones, boy and maid,  
 Will blush as they turn away  
 Sighing and smiling, afraid  
 Its secret bliss to betray ;  
 Whilst the others, whose hearts be cleft  
 For the grave of a lost love, laid  
 Dead in its birthplace,—'reft  
 Of the hopes that with shadows have play'd,  
 Will sigh 'Our sole happiness left  
 Is to wander and weep in the shade.'<sup>1</sup>  
 Why is it? They know not why.  
 'Tis an antique mystery.  
 This nursling of Night's lone heart  
 Hath known sorrow, and learn'd to be still  
 But it cherisheth, pure and apart,  
 In its own chaste silence chill,  
 A memory, mighty, immense  
 Of passionate love and pain ;  
 A memory mixt with a sense  
 Of deep desire and disdain ;  
 A memory made intense  
 By a love that was loved in vain !”

## 7.

Here, sighing in the sedge, the Water made  
 A restless moan of weary resignation ;  
 As who should say 'I heed not what is said,  
 Altho' I hear it.' And a dull pulsation  
 Darken'd the melancholy moonbeam laid  
 To listless rest along the late stagnation  
 Of the now rippled liquid in her lone  
 Low reedy creeks. The musing Mount went on :

“ Ere Love was acquainted with Sorrow,  
Ere Eve was a wife or a mother,  
Ere the even was 'ware of the morrow,  
Or yet either had banisht the other,  
In Eden the Night and the Morn  
Were dissever'd as soon as born.  
The *Fiat Lux* thunders thro' heaven !  
And, awakening Creation, hath riven  
The resonant portals of Light.  
All gushing with glorious surprises  
The Sun, in his royalty, rises,  
And bursts on the realm of the Night.  
He comes ! and the Silence profound,  
That hath watch'd with droopt wings spread afar  
Over Night's maiden dreams, at the sound  
Of the steps of the conquering star,  
Is smitten and scatter'd in flight.  
And he comes : lifts the veil from her breast,  
And sees naked the beautiful Night.  
*Venit, vidit* . . . who knows not the rest ?  
O what an awakening was there !  
What rapture ! and O what despair !  
One moment hath ruin'd forever  
Love and power. Alas, he, and she ?  
Light and Darkness ? Impossible ! Never,  
O never, such union can be !  
Such, of old, was the destiny vain  
Of that incompatible twain :  
And such is the endless condition  
Of Passion, the child of disdain  
And desire,—life and death in transition !  
Hope snatcht from the breast of despair  
Is hers, and a life that is death ;  
For she breathes in the deadliest air,  
And she dies of but one quiet breath.  
Her food is the fruit that's forbidden :  
Her pleasure a prayer never granted :  
Her strength is a wish that is chidden :  
And her weakness the thing that she wanted ! ”

## 8.

High winds, that vex'd not the still earth, began  
To smite the upmost heaven. With fitful light  
The stricken moon thro' fleecy cloudlets ran.

The Mountain, from that drift of dark and bright  
Which o'er him glimpsed in alternation wan,  
Caught mystic motion ; and, in spectral flight  
Hovering above the melancholy plain,  
The spirit that was in him spake again :

“ And the Sun, never-resting, forsaken,  
And fierce in his anguish of light,  
Cries thro' heaven ‘ Where art thou ? awaken,  
And return to me, fugitive Night ! ’  
But she, whose unsatisfied lover  
Thus renews his importunate flame,  
Where hides she ? with what does she cover  
Her beauty, her babe, and her shame ?  
Ask yon quivering splendours, that swim  
The blue dark in bright shoals overspread,  
If they know in what solitude dim  
Night is hiding her desolate head :  
And those liveried lackeys of Light  
(In the cause of Light's glory enlisted)  
Will answer ‘ What is it, the Night ?  
’Tis a myth that has never existed ! ’  
Ask the planet whose golden urn  
Flows over with flaming amber  
As he, courtier-like, taketh his turn  
In the sun's bright antechamber :  
He laugheth ‘ The Sun is my king :  
The fallen are soon forgot :  
I follow the conquering :  
And the Night ? . . . I know her not.’  
And the sliding meteor will say,  
As he falls in a fiery drop,



'Who cares? I have miss'd my way,  
And can neither retrace it nor stop.'  
And, blushing, the Dawn will sigh  
'I awaked ere my dreams were done.  
They were fair; but I know not, I,  
If I dream'd of the Night . . . or the Sun?'  
And, if all things else deny her,  
Renounce the Night or ignore,  
Go, ask of the ghostly fire  
That hovers on that pale shore,  
Where, embark'd in its phantom comet,  
The wandering embryo waits  
God's finger to fashion from it  
A world of yet unknown fates:  
It will mutter 'I mark'd her creeping,  
By the light of a latent moon,  
Between two worlds and weeping,  
Like a beggar that asks a boon  
At the gates of a rich man's place,  
With a shamed and sorrowful mien:  
And I think it was to embrace  
Her sleeping babe unseen.'

"That babe, is it Bliss? But aloud  
Breathe the name of it never! At best  
'Tis a treasure that, risk'd if avow'd,  
Is in fear and in peril possess'd:  
Whose possessor, as one that encroacheth  
Upon ground that's forbidden, by night,  
All atremble his treasure approacheth  
But to bury it deep out of sight.  
And, O thou to whom never before  
Hath been utter'd this antique story,  
Insult not the shade (tho' no more  
Than a shadow it be) of lost glory.  
For what it must be at the last  
The Present doth ill to scorn.  
And the Present shall be the Past  
Ere the Future it boasts be born."

## 9.

Never before that venerable Mount  
Had spoken at such length : nor ever met  
A listener in whose ear he could recount  
Without ungracious interruption, yet,  
The fancies vague that, like a vented fount  
Whose struggling waters sudden outlet get,  
Upwell'd within him, and pour'd wide and free  
His secret thoughts in wandering reverie.

## 10.

But ah ! the old story-teller's pride received  
A sharp rebuff—not loud, but, certes, deep !  
When, pausing for an answer, he perceived  
The Water had been all this while asleep.  
Sleep thou, too, good old Mount ! with heart ungrieved,  
Tho' heedless ears thy long discourse hold cheap.  
Sleep, and good dreams be thine ! There are sins worse  
Than too much talk in unregarded verse.

## 11.

And, if men miss the moral of thy strain,  
Tell them 'tis in themselves, and tell them why.  
Wherever croaking commonwealths complain  
Of their old mountain bulwarks and deny  
Even the shadow of greatness, where in vain  
Is heard the voice of hoar Authority,  
There, lost among the morals of the time,  
May haply lurk the moral of thy rhyme.

## XLIII.

## TELEOLOGY.

## 1.

THE casement of a chamber in an inn  
O'erlook'd a courtyard full of weeds and stones.  
And on the stones and weeds that deck'd therein  
A haunt of blue-flies, heap'd with offal, bones,  
Ordures, and broken pots, and rusty tin,  
(Which 'neath this casement made a goodly show)  
Out of the lattice from the room within,  
A traveller whom it lodged was wont to throw  
The soap-suds daily scraped from cheek and chin,  
His razor's refuse, mixt with frothy flow  
Of basin-rinsings warm ; nor cared a pin  
Whose pate might catch such casual chrism. Below  
Upon a dunghill, thirsty, parcht, and thin,  
A miserable nettle chanced to grow.

## 2.

This wretched weed, which else had died of drought,  
In the chance rescue of that daily rain

Its own advantage found ; and, free from doubt,  
Perceiving in it adaptation plain  
Of means to a beneficent design,  
Exclaim'd " O Urticarian Jupiter,  
What wisdom is there in thy will divine !  
Who dost on all thy universe confer  
Convincing proofs of providence benign.  
By what supreme administrative feat  
Hast thou contrived for me, thy grateful child,  
Recurrence of this tepid torrent sweet !  
Which every morning with its moisture mild  
Revives my strength, and heals all hurtful heat.  
Whilst, regularly rising day by day,  
Thy gracious sun rules all the rolling year,  
Warms the wide world with his benignant ray,  
And in their season bids my buds appear.  
How admirably organised is all  
This wondrous world ! whose aspect everywhere  
Reveals to reverent thought, in great and small,  
Contrivance order'd with consummate care  
Its maker's purpose to fulfil : which is  
THE HAPPINESS OF NETTLES. Mighty Jove,  
On me thy mercies have not fallen amiss.  
Thy purpose I divine : and, proud to prove  
My part therein, each seed of mine that settles  
Shall do its best to fill the world with nettles."

## 3.

Thus, in good faith, the thriving weed adored  
The patronage of providence ; and, wedding,

The graceful action to the grateful word,  
Began to cover with a verdant spreading  
Of stinging stuff the filth it chanced to find  
A root in (how it knew not, neither why)  
'Mid shards, and scurf, and scum of every kind ;  
Convinced it was promoting worthily  
The strenuous effort of almighty Jove  
A virgin nettle forest to create.

## 4.

Meanwhile, the traveller in the room above  
Had finish'd the affair for which of late  
He had been lingering in that inn. The man  
Was (as the Fabulist forgot to state  
When he this Fable in hot haste began)  
A manufacturer in search of coal  
To feed his forges at the cheapest rate.  
And, having visited at last the whole  
Coal-bearing region, rummaged it about,  
And made his choice, now, wishing to get rid  
Of the rejected samples, he threw out  
(To join the other refuse that unchid  
Sprawl'd in the heat upon that heap of dung)  
The residue of his unclean collection.

## 5.

By woeful luck there chanced to fall among  
That grimy clan, in their abrupt ejection,

A heavy lump of carboniferous schist,  
Which flat upon the flowering nettle flopp'd ;  
Whose crusht philosophy, collapsing, miss'd  
Benignant purpose in the blow that stopp'd  
Philosophising with a pang of pain.  
" Fatality, and malediction !" hiss'd  
The mangled weed with indignation vain,  
" What Demon rules this universe, and slays  
Without a purpose, making earth one hell ?  
Blind Chance it is ! and since blind Chance obeys  
No guiding law, methinks it might as well  
Have fall'n on either side of me, instead  
Of tumbling thus precisely on my head ! "

## 6.

Uttering this blasphemy the nettle died.  
But not before his gaze, fast growing dim,  
Had contemplated with a mournful pride  
The tumulary pile that cover'd him.  
For there he mark'd the impress of a plant  
Of perisht centuries. That antique print  
Of vegetable forms no more extant  
He took for epitaph, admiring in 't  
The grandeur of his race in days gone by,  
And "*semper virens* !" was his life's last sigh.

## MORAL.

Self-Interest, whiles it prospers, aye believes  
Its profit the chief aim of Providence.  
And even death's sigil on the tomb deceives  
Its vanity with plausible pretence  
Of pride in nothingness, abasht no whit  
To join HIC JACET to HIC INCIPIT.

## XLIV.

## COGITO ERGO SUM.

## 1.

“ WHATSOEVER the names whereby men call things,  
I ponder, compare, and discriminate all things.”

Whose speech ? A philosopher's, say you, this ?  
If so, then your error is great as his.  
'Twas a Grocer's Balance that spoke that speech :  
His beam was rusty, his brass scales each  
Bumpt and bent ; yet as proud he hung  
Over the cheating counter, slung  
From a bar screw'd fast to a greasy shelf,  
As if Themis had hung him aloft herself.

For, having weigh'd all things (butter-pats,  
Snuff, cloves, coffee, and salted sprats),  
And determined their gravity, great or small,  
He believed that he understood them all.



## 2.

“ Now, man,” he resumed, with himself agreeing,  
“ Is an incomplete and impulsive being,  
Who, judging of things as they seem to be,  
Would misjudge them all, were it not for me.  
But his *a priori* I soon put straight  
By the solid and readjusting weight  
Of my *a posteriori* test.  
If at first I feel for a while opprest  
By the force of the problem thought presents  
To my brain-pan loaded with arguments,  
Mine impulse anon is to soar above it,  
Contemplate, cogitate, calculate, prove it.  
For my reason ever inclines in me  
My will, which is for that reason free,  
To the truth, where I rest and am satisfied,  
Between the extremes upon either side.  
There the goal is gain’d, and why further go ?  
Since I know that I think, what I think I must  
    know,  
And thus perfect, at last, to the point I come  
With my formula *cogito ergo sum*.”

## 3.

Those Weights which the Balance was pleased to call  
His arguments, being false weights all,  
Knew full well, and with secret glee,  
Mock’d at the trick of the whole machine,

"For if Justice had only eyes to see,  
 That rogue the Grocer had long since been  
 Hang'd by the neck as he ought to be,"  
 (These False Weights sneer'd with a surly spleen)  
 "And thou shouldst have served for his gallows tree.  
 Thou dost think, and so art? State the truth as it is,  
 Thou dost fancy thou thinkest, and thinkest thou art.  
 Be it so! It costs nothing to think that or this,  
 And let each have his fancy. We, too, for our part,  
 Have a notion 'tis worth not two penn'orth of twine,  
 What thou art or thou thinkest. But spare us, we  
     pray,  
 That absurd ergotistical Ergo of thine,  
 Which to others must sound disobliging if they  
 Chance to be without thinking. For instance, to man,  
 Who would surely not be what he is if he thought,  
 And is right; for the main thing's to be, if one can,  
 And to think about being is nutshell and naught.  
 As for thee, if thou canst, thou canst do nothing better  
 Than beget little scales, and take care that they be  
 Each, if possible, just like its precious begetter,  
 For the world's tongue is scandalous. So much for  
     thee!  
 For thine Ergo; not *cogito*, say, *ergo sum*,  
 But to *cogito* rather subjoin *ergo est*,  
 And, at least somewhat nearer the truth wilt thou  
     come;  
 To thy formula standing, but standing confest  
 Sole creator of that idiotic creation  
 Whose silly existence exists at the best

In the depths of thine own idiotic sensation.  
And then as for thy will ; it obeys the behest  
Of the motive that's strongest, a slave and a thrall  
To the force we all feel and yet none of us know.  
For the rickety tile that is ready to fall  
From the top of the roof if the wind blows high  
And be smasht to bits in the street below,  
First smashing the skull of some passer-by,  
Hath a will that's as free every whit as thine own,  
And the sense not, at least, to talk nonsense about it,  
Down it falls when it must, and it lies where 'tis  
    thrown,  
By an impulse received from a pressure without it.  
That pressure's Necessity. What she pronounces  
Finds thee, too, like others, obedient enough.  
What is coffee ? a pound of it weighs sixteen ounces,  
And so much, and no more, does a pound weigh of  
    snuff.  
This alone, at the most, canst thou know after weigh-  
    ing it,  
And 'tis but the result of thou knowest not what.  
If thou sayest it, 'tis that thou canst not help saying it,  
And thou never wilt say a thing truer than that."

## 4.

Now a metal is iron as hard as nails,  
Practical, patient, not easily bored :  
But ideas it hates, and against them prevails,  
As we often have seen, at the point of the sword.

Whilst the Balance uphung 'twixt the earth and the  
sky,  
And by nature responsive to every vibration,  
Hovers vague in a realm insubstantial and high  
Which seems made for the purpose of pure speculation.  
So that when "sixteen ounces of snuff are a pound-  
weight,"  
The Weights cried below to the Balance above,  
Tho' he knew not, as we do, that this was unsound  
weight,  
He replied, with a shrug, "Well, and what does that  
prove?"  
Then, convinced that he had by this interrogation  
Their materialist insolence sternly put down,  
He return'd with a tremor of self-admiration  
To the point out of which the discussion had grown.

## 5.

And so matters went on, until brought to a stop  
By a quite unforeseen and unpleasant event :  
When one day on the Grocer's iniquitous shop  
The Police made an inquisitorial descent ;  
Which establish'd the fact that each weight was a  
light one,  
That the Balance had in it a tendency strong  
To incline to the side that was never the right one,  
And the Grocer had known of the trick all along.

The Grocer was fined. The Police took possession  
Of the Balance and Weights. These the Law handed  
over  
To the anvil and hammer, that made an impression  
Upon them from which they will never recover.

## 6.

In one sack of old iron regardlessly shaken  
Do FREE WILL and NECESSITY rust evermore.  
To a different system the Grocer has taken,  
And he cheats more ingeniously now than before.

## XLV.

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE LITTLE.

Two cousins (they were but of distant degree,  
But blood's thicker than water, and each was a Flea)  
Met each other by chance. Bid not History tell  
(For the goings of Fleas are inscrutable)  
Whereabouts it was in their nightly walk  
The dark kinsmen, meeting, fell into a talk  
In the usual over-emphatic style  
Of friends who, when after a long, long while  
They meet unawares, in that unwill'd meeting  
Evince, by a nervously-cordial greeting,  
Keener care for each other's affairs  
Than they honestly feel. For if one of them wears  
A threadbare coat, though as warm perhaps  
As the weather in June be the breast it wraps,  
At the sight of it something shuts somewhere  
In the heart, like a door in a draught of air.  
Now one of these two was a fine fat Flea :  
To the other, a lean one, "Coz," quoth he,  
In a tone of compassionate semi-suspicion  
" You seem to be terribly out of condition."

“Alas !” said the lean one, “friend, in me,  
The ruin’d though innocent victim you see  
Of one fatal error beyond recall.  
My means of life I invested all  
In the skin of an Ape. It was juicy and fat.  
I married in haste on the strength of that,  
Had a numerous family, daughters, sons,  
Nor was Flea ever father of fairer ones.  
Now wife and little ones, all are lost !  
Ah ! had I but counted the care and cost,  
Or had I but dream’d of the danger and toil,  
When I settled first on that fertile soil !  
I confess my fault. I was taken in.  
Who could guess that an Ape has so ticklish a skin ?  
The brute was prurient, and idle too,  
With nothing better all day to do  
Than scratch, scratch, scratch ; you conceive the  
despair  
Of a flea whose whole livelihood hangs by a hair.  
But enough of the miseries *I* have gone thro’.  
My illustrious friend how much better with *you*,  
Has the world, since we parted, been wagging !” “So,  
so !”  
Complacently nodded the other. “I know  
Nothing much, on the whole, I can grumble about,  
Save a plaguy sharp twinge now and then of the gout.  
’Tis the fruit of good fare and the life that I lead  
Which is pleasant enough.” “So it *must* be, indeed !”  
The lean Flea said with a hungry sigh.  
“But where are you living ?” “Luxuriously

With my friend the Lion." "The Lion? alack!"  
The starveling stammer'd as he skipp'd back,  
"Have, then, his terrible claws and teeth  
Their use forgone? How! dwelling beneath  
Those dread conditions, hast thou possest  
A single moment of ease or rest?"  
Scornfully smiled the superior Flea.  
"What are his claws or his teeth to me?  
Leonine talons may tear wild bulls,  
They cannot fidget a flea. Fear dulls,  
O foolish cousin, thy feeble wit.  
Apes scratch themselves at each itching fit,  
And in public pick out their private fleas,  
Not resenting disgust if they get but ease.  
Thine own insignificance prudently trust.  
A lion bears nobly what nobleness must.  
Of a friend's experience this maxim learn,  
And I'll warrant you, Cousin, 'twill serve your turn :  
*From a world of foes wouldst thou live exempt?*  
*Then shelter thyself in the world's contempt.*  
*'Tis a fortune subscribed by all creatures for thee.*  
*Go, trade on it! safe—if thou art but a flea."*



## XLVI.

## MASTER AT HOME.

## PART I.

IN grateful memory of each gracious reference  
Made to them by the one and thousand stories  
Of Queen Scheherazade,—or duteous deference  
To him in whom its immemorial glories  
Their realm attain'd,—the Beasts decreed thy name  
Haroun Alraschid, to the bravest, best,  
And noblest of their kings—a king whose fame  
His title merited, as mightiest  
Of monarchs leonine. Nor e'er hath been  
That ancient realm so fair and flourishing  
At any time before or since, I ween,  
As when HAROUN the Illustrious was King.

That Royal lion, like his namesake, loved  
To roam, incognito, his realms by night,  
And if—at morn, what time it heedless roved,  
Some subject's stumbling footstep chanced to 'light

Upon a heap of bones, or bloody fleece,  
Where, in the dark, the King of Beasts had been,  
Or if, upon the barks of drooping trees  
Some Beaver's tooth, calumniously keen,  
Had scored a scandalous chronicle,—what then?  
Who is exempt from scandal? Not the great.  
Are not the mighty paths of mighty men  
Strewn with such ugly traces of the fate  
Of little ones? And what's a sheep or two  
Lost in a lion's glory and renown?  
To his high name and famous title true,  
Fear'd and revered was the great Lion Haroun.  
But was he happy? Whosoe'er had seen  
The grace, the beauty, and the loveliness  
Of the young Lioness, Haroun's fair Queen,  
Could surely doubt not of the monarch's bliss:  
Limbs whose luxurious and majestic mould  
Seem'd by some mighty artist's magic hand  
Shaped into gliding form from flexile gold;  
And, what most won the heart of all the land,  
Oh, such a nameless charm of grace refined,  
In every movement, queenly feminine,  
Of the soft tail that, curving, swept behind,  
And scarcely stirr'd a single sandgrain fine  
With its light fringe, yet gave to all the rest  
Expression irresistibly enchanting;  
A charm by high-born dames alone possest.  
In short, no beauty to the queen was wanting.  
All female charms were hers: and she was his:  
But ah! the heart that every joy possesses

Except one joy, if that one joy it miss,  
All joy in all it hath too often misses !  
Oft o'er the king's majestic brow would rise  
The wrinkling shadow of a secret care ;  
Oft o'er the orbits of his fervid eyes  
The massive muscle swell'd as though it were  
Stung by a sudden inward irritation ;  
Whilst restless swishings of the royal tail  
Gave momentary tokens of vexation ;  
Which his proud soul allow'd not to prevail,  
But, with impatient toss of the large mane,  
Shook scornful off : then, with a yawn immense,  
Half of submission, half of deep disdain,  
Mixt with a supercilious somnolence,  
The wide jaws gaped, and he, as one resign'd  
To those small troubles which infest the great,  
Stretch'd slow his lordly limbs. The Court divined  
The Monarch's mood : anxieties of State !  
Oft, at the dead of night the antler'd Hart,  
Couch'd in the grass beside his spotted Doe,  
From restless dreams would tremulously start  
And, heedless, strike his ornamented brow  
All scared against the elm-tree's neighbouring bark ;  
When from the far-off, deep-porch'd palace, borne  
Along the listening silence of the dark,  
Fierce cries of royal wrath and passionate scorn,  
And then the roaring fall, and heavy roll  
Of mighty ones with mighty ones contending  
Startled the poor stag's palpitating soul ;  
His straddled slender legs beneath him bending.

His spouse, too, hearing what he heard, half rose,  
Seared for a moment by that ominous sound :  
But, when her glance fell on the horn'd brows  
Of her good helpmate conjugally crown'd,  
She, with a slight toss of her dainty head,  
(Significant of pacified alarm)  
Settled again to sleep in her soft bed  
Safe hid among the forest herbage warm.  
And when, next morn, the Monarch sat in Hall,  
His mien was sombre and his mood irate,  
Matted and torn his mane, and swollen all  
His mighty limbs. Anxieties of State !

## PART II.

The lordly Lion Haroun one day  
Beneath a shady wood,  
A solitary lounge lay  
In meditative mood.  
From public cares retired,  
But not from care releast,  
Of life, and all things, tired,  
The noble-minded beast  
Oft sadly sigh'd, the while he eyed  
The summer grass and flowers ;  
And, sighing, heard each happy bird  
That piped from pleasant bowers  
To gratulate its brooding mate  
On June's unclouded hours.

Then forth there came, from out of a vine  
That round an elm did range  
Her garlands green and globes of wine,  
A little creature strange.

It was of the Monarch's million  
Loyal subjects, doubtless, one.  
But never before that minute  
Had the Monarch noticed the little creature ;  
Uncouth of form, minute of feature,  
And yet, with something in it  
That seem'd to strike and harmonise  
With the cause of the Monarch's moody sighs ;  
And the Lion's eye-glance tarried  
On the pinnacled house, with its painted face,  
Which, at a slow and a solemn pace,  
The Snail on his shoulders carried.

Doubtless that tiny householder  
Guess'd not what kingly eye  
Did on his movements then confer  
Its royal scrutiny.

For on, with smooth important motion,  
He paced, as though he had a notion  
That he was lord of all the way.  
His house upon his back he bore,  
And on his forehead standards four :  
Erect and proud were they.

To him (thus travelling leisurely,  
Unconscious of the Lion's eye)  
    Across the path made haste.  
Another, smaller, wayfarer,  
Swifter-footed, swarthier,  
    And slim about the waist.  
Then these two mutes, perceiving each  
The other, in their native speech  
    Did one another hail,  
And with familiar salutation  
Fell into close confabulation,  
    The Emmet and the Snail.

Haroun, the Lion, understood  
(As all good sovereigns do, or should)  
The dialects and languages  
    Of his provincial subjects fully.  
And, glad to escape the weary stress  
    Of thoughts morose and melancholy  
Which did just then his mind oppress,  
He hail'd with silent satisfaction  
The chance of finding some distraction  
In listening to the chatterings  
Of such small folk, on such small things  
As cabbage-leaves and pips of pine,  
And weather-changes, foul or fine ;  
In short each ordinary matter  
Of such folk's ordinary chatter.

## PART III.

The little Emmet shook his head :

“ O Caracol ! O Caracol ! \*

I would not be the King,” he said,

“ In such bad times.” (With prescient soul  
Haroun the Lion prick’d an ear.)

“ Why, neighbour, why ? ” said Caracol.

“ Ah, Caracol ! ah, gossip dear,”

The little Emmet still ran on,

“ You stay-at-home, you’ll live and die,

Not dreaming what great things are done  
In the great world. But, gossip, I

Go gadding here and there, you know,  
And many a thing upon the sly

I pick up that’s worth knowing.” “ How ! ”

Quoth Caracol, “ good gossip say,

(I am, indeed, a perfect stranger  
To what you hint at,) tell me, pray,

Is, then, the Empire now in danger ?  
From what ? Explain, friend, if you know,  
Domestic brawl, or foreign foe ?

A puissant King have we ! ”

“ No, Caracol—I’ll tell you—no,  
From civic brawl, and foreign foe,

The Empire still is free.

But, ah ! dear gossip, if you knew,  
You never said a thing less true—

\* The Spanish for snail is here used as a proper name.

The King's *not* puissant."—"He !  
 What mean you, friend ?" said Caracol.  
 (Haroun suppress'd a scornful growl.)

"I mean—upon my life,  
 'Tis true," the Emmet said, "the King  
 Can rule his states—rule everything,  
 But his unruly wife.

The King's not master of the Queen,  
 She masters him. And, this I mean,

That, master'd by his spouse,  
 At home he is not puissant—nay,  
 Not even—the plain truth to say—  
 At home in his own house.

I know a secret gallery  
 All thro' the palace ('tis thereby  
 I pick up odds and ends.)

Ah, if you knew what goings on !  
 What shocking, shocking things are done,  
 What hosts of private friends  
 The Queen receives upon the sly !  
 Poor King ! I'm sure I pity him."  
 Said Caracol, "And so do I !"

The Snail's small optic nerve was dim  
 With sympathetic moisture. "Why,"  
 Sigh'd Caracol, "what's after all,  
 Such greatness worth ?" The Emmet small

Resumed, "Without rebuff  
 We rule, friend, you and I, our spouses,  
 Nor fear to enter our own houses.  
*Abroad*, the King, indeed, looks great :



All envy him his power and state.

*At home*, he's small enough !

“ O Caracol ! my Caracol !

I would not, trust me, for the whole

Broad realm that he calls his,

Be that unhappy King.” “ Nor I !”

Said Caracol with glistening eye,

“ My house my castle is.

And, gossip, you and I can say

(What, ah ! *he* cannot) day by day,

Tho' not in palace dome,

On purple couch, but humble bed,

Each lays his undishonour'd head,

‘ Master am I at home ! ’”

#### PART IV.

Roaring with wrath and outraged pride,

Haroun, the lordly Lion, sprung.

The little Emmet slipp'd aside,

And hid himself the grass among.

The Snail, who could not go so quick,

Pull'd his four timorous standards down,

Swallow'd himself, and (terror-sick)

Was to a mere saliva grown.

The royal Lion, in its base distress,

The wretched creature saw,

He could have crusht it into nothingness,  
    With one stroke of his paw.  
In a cold sweat lay Caracol. No doubt,  
    Master at home was he.  
But master *of* his home, he now found out,  
    'Twas harder far to be.

Howbeit, happily for Caracol,  
    Haroun the Lion, with a lion's whim,  
Or else a monarch's scornful self-control,  
    Pass'd onward, musing, and so harm'd not him.  
"A worm," the Lion mused, "an abject clot  
    Of animated slime, that creeps infirm,  
Is lord in his own house...and I am not?  
    Well...be it so! The worm is still a worm.  
I am a king. Bah!...burrow and crawl...become  
    One with this earth's obscurest denizens,  
To be...as they are...each in his own home  
    Master...of what? mere subterranean dens,  
Or flimsy tenements...where they abide,  
    This—a sick jelly without even a spine,  
That—a grimed drudge?" And the great Lion sigh'd  
    Sadly..."O Leontine! O Leontine!"

## XLVII.

## THE PLANE AND THE PENKNIFE.

A LITTLE Penknife, with sore toil and pain,  
In unskill'd hands, was desperately trying  
To smooth a great rough plank against the grain.  
“Cease, little fool !” that frustrate labour spying,

A Plane exclaim'd “I'll show thee how to do it !”  
And galloping up and down, he raced  
Nimble along the plank, as tho' he knew it  
And found the rough work pleasant to his taste.

Like curdling foam, small shavings here and there  
Bubbled ; and where the swift Plane flitted o'er  
The hard wood, waxing bald, its shaven hair  
In yellow ringlets floated to the floor ;

Leaving reveal'd, in delicate design,  
The section'd surface of each wavy vein  
And rosin-colour'd ring with fringes fine.  
Then, proudly pausing, “There now !” cried the  
Plane.

“How shall I ever thank thee, friend, enough?”

The Penknife, much admiring, made reply,  
And from his tender blade some notches rough  
He wiped, like teardrops from a grateful eye.

“Thou shalt not thank me, little fool, at all ;

But do thy proper work as I do mine.”  
The Plane in accents magisterial  
Said to the Penknife. “Carve thou figures fine

“In lucid maple ; or, at most essay

Thy tender tooth on the ambitious box,  
That deems himself as brave, in his own way,  
As elephantine ivory. On blocks

“Of his unfeatured flesh do thou engrave

Rare pictures delicate with dainty lines.  
To beautify some poet’s gentle page,  
Or solace Science with mysterious signs :

“Or round about some richly-foliaged frame

Wreath, rope, and cherub, sculpture, gay with gold,  
To enshrine the image of a high-born dame  
Linn’d by the painter’s peerless art of old.

“For this thou *canst* do, and this cannot I.

And in our family the rule holds good  
That each must do his best to justify  
Steel’s born superiority to wood.

“The Axe, our father, in the forest wages  
Stout battle with the centenary oaks ;  
And they, the giants of a hundred ages,  
Sink groaning underneath his sturdy strokes.

“Ho ! ho ! the crash, when the old warrior goes  
In at them, and their rattling harness, plied  
By his reiterated ponderous blows,  
Bursts into faggots ! That is iron’s pride.

“The Saw, our mother, when she’s set agoing  
Goes thro’ it bravely, with a right good will.  
Once let her show her teeth, and there’s no knowing  
What dust she’ll make about her in the mill.

“The lazy trees that lounged about the wood  
And scarce bestirr’d themselves the whole day long,  
She turns to trusty planks for service good.  
I, the strong firstborn of our parents strong,

“Less strong than they are, am yet strong enough  
To finish the good work by them begun.  
Too tender *thou* art for such labour tough.  
Thou, brother, thou, the old couple’s youngest son,

“Since strength thou hast for nothing else, be thou  
At least an artist. We are of the few  
Eorn each, to make a mark i’ th’ world, and show  
There’s metal in us. To thy birth be true.”

## MORAL.

Plain-spoken the Plane is,  
And somewhat o'erweening  
But noble his strain is,  
Since noble its meaning.

Noble utility  
Only is able  
To boast the nobility  
Praised in this fable.

## XLVIII.

## THE DRAG AND THE WHEEL.

## 1.

CLICK ! clack ! with a whoop and a whack !  
The way is white, and the woods are black.  
Thro' glare and gloom, now in now out,  
What are the dust and noise about ?  
In the cloud o' the dust, in the clear o' the day,  
What is it comes from the hills this way,  
Creaking, reeking, heavy and hot,  
Downward, townward, What is it ? What ?

## 2.

The road is steep from the mountain-tops :  
Zigzag, lower and lower, it drops,  
Slanting, sidling, fantastically  
Down to the inn by the brook in the valley ;  
Whence it runs straight as a road can run,  
Half in the shadow and half in the sun.

## 3.

Rumbling, grumbling, lumbering slow,  
With a hi-gee-up ! and a hi-gee-wo !  
In the white o' the dust, in the heat o' the day,  
'Tis a loaded wagon that comes this way.  
And its heavily-harness'd horses four  
Pant and smoke as they stop at the door  
Of the roadside inn, to rest them awhile ;  
For the team, since morn, hath been many a mile.

## 4.

While the grooms were giving the horses drink,  
The wagoner loosen'd the ponderous link,  
Lifted the glowing Drag, and again  
Hung him up by his iron chain  
Behind the wagon, 'twixt wheel and wheel.

## 5.

That Drag was shodden with stoutest steel ;  
But his rusty shoe was half worn away  
By the flinty ruts which had day by day  
Been rubbing him bare, as, clutching it still,  
He carried his wagon-load safe down hill.

## 6.

So now, as he swung there high and dry,  
“ Ouf ! ” groan'd he, “ what a drudge am I !



'Tis a pretty sort of a life I lead !  
Bearing the burden and staying the speed  
Of a wagon with ten good loads at least,  
Of timber atop ! each stupid beast  
Tugging away the more for me,  
And the stupid wheel, with its bandy knee  
Dug into my ribs, still doing its best  
To be turning round when it ought to rest !  
And what reward have I had of it yet ?  
Do good to others, small thanks you get !  
For, look at these useless Wheels here (nay,  
Useless, said I ? far worse are they !)  
If they had their will they would soon upset  
Wagon, and timber, and all ! And yet  
Tho' the wagon is saved by my wise prevention,  
It is only they that receive attention.  
Do their spokes fall out ? they are reinstated.  
Do their axles creak ? they are lubricated,  
Greased, and eased, and coax'd to be quiet.  
Do their tires fall off ? they get new ones by it,  
And go braced with a bran-new iron band,  
Brave as (bright arm'd by his lady's hand)  
Some knight sallies forth to the tournament,  
Whiles I, each bone of whose back is bent  
In their service, wearing myself away,  
Get never a thank-you night or day  
For the care without which (woe is me !)  
Soon would the wagon in pieces be."

## 7.

One of the Wheels to the Drag replied :  
“ Moderate, prithee, thy boastful pride,  
Thou who dost moderate other folk’s speed,  
Doing naught else in the world, indeed !  
Times (I acknowledge it) now and then  
Happen to us, as they happen to men,  
When our virtues are, for a while, defects.  
But ’tis so with the world’s best intellects ;  
And those times are rare. I have heard men say  
There be water-wagons, whose perilous way  
Is over the sea. When it blows great gales,  
Their wagoners then take in the sails,  
And throw out the anchor ; putting the drag on,  
And stopping the wheels of the water-wagon.  
But say, are the sails no use at sea ?  
Is the anchor the sole thing needed ? We  
Are as good by land as, by sea, the sails :  
And, as good as the anchor is for the gales,  
Is the Drag for the hill-sides—going down.  
But the gales and the hills are exceptions, own !  
To each his merit ; but none need brag.  
More often the Wheel is of use than the Drag,  
As you’ll see in a minute.”

## 8.

The beasts were fed :  
The wagoner jump’d on the wagon, and said,

“ All right ! ” and away with no fear of a fall,  
Started the wagon, and horses and all,  
At a brisk merry trot o’er the long low road  
That wound thro’ the valley, so smooth and broad.  
The dust flew up, and the sparks flew out,  
The wagoner smack’d his whip with a shout,  
“ Hu ! hu ! ” and the wheels went round :  
’Twas a pleasure to see them get over the ground.

## 9.

Their motion, mockingly, made the Drag  
Like a pendulum this way and that way wag.  
He seem’d, with a shrug of contempt, to say, “ Prithee  
Go along, silly world, and the devil go with thee !  
Hustle me ! justle me ! flout me still !  
My turn will come—at the turn of the hill.”

## 10.

He was right. His turn came round at last :  
And pass’d away—when the hill was past.

## XLIX.

## A HAUGHTY SPIRIT BEFORE A FALL.

## PART I.

## 1.

“BLIND, blind is fate ! unjust and hard my lot,  
Who bear the burden of oblivious days  
Unnoticed and uncheer'd from spot to spot  
By dull and difficult ways !  
How enviably doth the blissful bird  
Bathe her free life in sunshine and sweet air,  
Earth's lightest elements, and undeterr'd  
Roam the wide welkin ! There  
Sublime she wanders with delighted mind  
Thro' heaven's high glories—I but guess, debarr'd  
From contemplation of them. Fate is blind,  
Unjust my lot, and hard !”

## 2.

Thus, tired by slow and weary pilgrimage  
Along a short, smooth, easy road, complain'd

A Tortoise ; resting ere the last long stage  
 To his near goal was gain'd.  
 Head, feet, and tail i' the dust, he lay spread out  
 Self-crucified, a star that no light gave.  
 Deep-buried in himself, he bore about  
 His own life's living grave.  
 Yet dream'd he ever of a great existence,  
 Where, in lone lorddom over sea and land,  
 Sun-crown'd and girdled with the azure distance  
 The monarch mountains stand.

## 3.

Then suddenly the ambitious dreamer found  
 His sordid life uplifted. Like his mind  
 Sublime his body soar'd. His native ground  
 Sank as he rose i' the wind.  
 And underneath the wide world opens round him.  
 The silvery windings of the waters shine  
 Like little sinuous snakes. No limits bound him  
 Save the broad heavens divine.  
 The sprawling woods that seem'd immeasurable  
 Clump themselves into definite dark shapes.  
 The light green meadows lengthen. Skyward swell  
 Grey curves of mountain capes.  
 Deep in cold hollows of extinguisht fire  
 Sleep the intense blue tarns. Sharp points of snow  
 Glitter, and valleys green with ice-fields, higher  
 Than other green things grow.

The pure caress of airs, tho' keen not harsh,  
Cool in the calm of that ethereal height  
Fan the delighted dweller of the marsh,  
Thrill'd by unwonted flight.  
A second Ganymede some second Jove,  
Seeking for beauty here on earth misknown,  
In him hath haply found, and borne above  
To the Olympian Throne.  
So deem'd the dupe of his own blind ambition,  
And cried, "O my prophetic soul, at last  
The Gods repent! Accepting Fate's contrition,  
I do forgive the past."

## PART II.

## I.

And tho', indeed, no Ganymede  
The beast was, yet 'tis true  
That Jove's own bird on him conferr'd  
This god-like point of view.  
For, as of old, some bandit bold,  
Baulk'd of his promised prey  
(The Bishop's self with bags of pelf)  
Might grumbling bear away  
The Bishop's Fool whose limping mule  
Belated lags behind,  
So, missing aim at nobler game,  
An Eagle chanced to find

The torpid beast ; unfit to feast  
His Eaglet brood, but still  
A trifling toy which they, for joy  
And not for food, might kill.

## 2.

As in the Eagle's claw  
The Tortoise upward sail'd,  
His flight a Swallow saw,  
And, " O beware !" she wail'd,  
" Against thy nature's law  
Why hast thou rashly rail'd ?  
Poor denizen of dust,  
Confide not in the fate  
Which doth exalt, and must  
Destroy, thee soon or late.  
Be warn'd in time : mistrust  
The contact of the great."  
" Error !" that dupe replied.  
" The patron who in me  
My latent genius spied  
Respects it, tho' it be  
By unjust gods denied  
What they bestow'd on thee.  
Thanks to his recognition,  
I lack no longer now  
The long-desired condition  
Which gives to such as thou

Their freedom, and position  
Above the world. I know  
That on the restoration  
To me, and to my race,  
Of that exalted station  
Which we were born to grace,  
Depends the whole creation.  
Till then all's out of place."

## PART III.

## 1.

And, tho' his listener long ago was gone,  
And to the empty air he spoke alone,  
Still he continued, with important tone.

## 2.

"Scorn not the form by dædal ages made  
For my adornment and the world's devotion,  
In symbol of the fixt foundation laid  
For the world's motion !  
The first word of creation was Testudo,  
And all was in the word. My sire grandæval  
Bore on his back (as easily as you do  
Chafer or weevil  
In beak or claw) the elephant gigantic,  
Who bore the whole world's weight upon his own.



Wild Change, the revolutionary antic,

Was then unknown ;

Then, based on principle, the world stood fast ;

And when the changing world to changeless me  
Repentant turns, then all shall rest at last

Where all should be.

You others are as wanton as the weather,

Respecting naught. But truth survives neglect.

I wait, and hug myself, and keep together

My self-respect.

Who knows ? The old Saturnian times return :

Order I bring, and peace, to earth again,

When tipsy Fortune from her tilted urn

Shakes down " . . . .

Just then

His evil star, on which he had not reckon'd,

Wink'd, and a Hare into the open beckon'd.

The Eagle spied the tempting prey,

Unclasp'd his claws, and, well-a-day !

As swift as crash

Succeeds to flash,

When thunder-clouds together clash,

A swooning fall, a sounding smash !

And on the earth, it was his vain

Tho' brave ambition to sustain,

Shatter'd the Tortoise lay.

## PART IV.

The friend that warn'd him in his hour of pride  
His downfall spied.  
The modest bird, with fondly flutter'd breast,  
Flew to the nest  
Which she, who throws in sport o'er sea and land  
(Beneath it spann'd)  
The æry bridge so exquisitely light  
Of her bold flight,  
Builds, safely shelter'd under low-thatch'd eaves,  
Of clay and leaves.  
There did she mourn, "Mistaken aspiration  
Is self-damnation.  
He who himself hath misappreciated,  
Is twice ill-fated.  
For what his nature never may attain  
He pines in vain,  
Whilst in his natural home, whate'er it be,  
A stranger he !  
Ah, hadst thou known the world as well as I,  
Ne'er from on high  
Wouldst thou have fallen, but hadst lived content  
As nature meant.  
Thee doth desire impel to thine unrest,  
Me to my nest."

## I.

## THE ROSE AND THE BRAMBLE.

THERE was a garden—no matter where—  
The world is full of such gardens. There  
Flowers of all colour and odour grew ;  
And, whatever their odour, whatever their hue,  
The gardener gave to them each alike  
What for each was good. In congenial ground  
He set each seedling to shoot and strike ;  
Each sprout he cherish'd and water'd round  
With the self-same vigilance everywhere,  
Tended each bud with the self-same care ;  
And, nevertheless, in colour and scent,  
They came up, all of them, different.  
Each had something that best became it :  
Each had some quality fair and fit :  
Each had a beauty whereby to name it :  
Each had a merit to praise in it.  
One by its leaf, and one by its stem,  
This by its colour, and that by its smell,  
These by their blossomy diadem,  
And those by their fruit, did the rest excel.

But when that garden was open'd, those  
Who walk'd there, turn'd, as they wander'd by,  
With one accord to admire the Rose ;  
And the rest of the flowers could guess not why.  
For " Each flower's a flower," they all averr'd,  
" And the Rose is *only* a flower we know."

Now the praise bestow'd on the Rose most stirr'd  
The surprise of a Bramble that happen'd to grow  
Quite close to the Rose. And he said, " We have  
grown,  
Since we were seeds in the same soil sown,  
Ever together, the Rose and I ;  
And I never could find out yet, I own,  
What there is in her to catch men's eye.  
However next Spring, it shall be my duty  
To find the Rose's secret out."

The Bramble felt not the Rose's beauty,  
And he thought, "'Tis her manner of growing, no  
doubt.  
One has but to notice and do the same."

So the Bramble, as soon as the next Spring came,  
Noticed ; and saw that the Rose's stem  
Was all cover'd with thorns ; and " Oh ho !" quoth  
he,  
"'Tis the thorns that do it ! But we'll beat *them*,  
And the world shall see what the world shall see."

Then, by checking the natural circulation  
Of his proper sap in a few May morns  
The Bramble, ambitious of admiration,  
To imitate Roses put forth thorns.  
Yet still, as before, to admire the Rose  
The folk pass'd by him. "Good folks," cried he,  
"These thorns of mine are more sharp than those  
That roughen the rosebush. Turn, and see!"  
But nobody heard what the Bramble cried,  
Or a passing glance of approval cast him.  
Then, to catch the notice, the Bramble tried,  
By catching the skirts, of all who pass'd him.

Which attempt succeeded too well, indeed.  
For the folk then noticed the Bramble, crying,  
"Gardener, away with this troublesome weed,  
Which tears our clothes!" And the gardener, spying  
The cause of complaint, "Not in all my life  
Was I ever disgraced before," he said,  
"By such a sad eyesore!" whipping his knife  
Out of his pocket; and soon, half dead,  
With his feelers all by the roots uptorn,  
On the other side of the garden wall  
Was the luckless Bramble flung forlorn,  
To fare as he might there, thorns and all.

The Bramble ruefully shook his head,  
And "What in the world does it mean?" he said.  
"May I be blighted if I can see  
What the difference is 'twixt the Rose and me!"

One thing alone have I understood :  
That what in a Bramble is taken ill  
In a Rose is reckon'd all fair and good.  
But the reason why is a mystery,  
And of vying with Roses I've had my fill."

Then the Bramble crawl'd away to the wood :  
And there in the wood you may find him still.

## L.I.

DUCUNT VOLENTEM FATA : NOLENTEM  
TRAHUNT.

## 1.

A MAN, who lack'd even means to make amends  
By health and hope for lack of wealth and friends,  
Having no tie to life save pain's harsh tether,  
Resolved to end both pain and life together ;  
And leapt into a river to fulfil  
That woeful purpose, when, against his will,  
Another man, rich, happy, hopeful, young,  
Whilst listening to the bridal bells that rung  
Blithe recognition of his marriage morn,  
Fell into the same river. Both were borne  
Adown the stream ; whose wave, indifferent  
To different causes, rolling onward went  
To reach the same effect ; regardless which  
It drown'd the first, the poor man or the rich.

## 2.

A Sage, who happen'd to be passing by,  
And saw those two men drowning, was thereby  
Thrown into a long train of thoughts, profound  
And rapid as that river. At one bound,  
The recollection that he could not swim  
Came in the first thought that occur'd to him.  
The second from the first as swiftly flow'd  
As wave from wave, and, by reflection, show'd,  
Concerning those two miserable men,  
Who to their deaths were drifting close in ken,  
That, if he tried to help them, there might be,  
Instead of only two drown'd bodies, three.  
His third thought was, that 'twas no use at all  
To run in search of aid, or even call,  
Since, long ere aid could reach them, even if found,  
The wretches must infallibly be drown'd.  
His fourth thought, which at once he acted on,  
As being the sole thing proper to be done  
Without delay, was to elucidate  
To these two victims of the force of fate  
Fate's ways, by force of prudent precept. Now,  
Tho' how to swim he knew not, he knew how  
To talk in Latin. That was his profession.  
And, (being himself in safe and sound possession  
Of all his wits) as loud as he was able,  
He, in the words which introduce this Fable,  
" *Ducunt volentem fata,*" with a shout,  
" *Nolentem trahunt,*" from the bank bawl'd out.



## 3.

And was it chance, or was it intuition ?  
Vast were the treasures of his erudition ;  
But from the stores of truths which he possess'd  
(The one half serving to refute the rest)  
That Sage, by dint of long and deep reflection,  
Could not have made a luckier selection,  
For, whilst Philosophy thus took her stand  
Calm, as became her, upon good firm land,  
The truth which she proclaim'd, (put out no whit  
By plentiful cold water pour'd on it)  
Her influence proved ; awakening there and then  
In the damp'd spirits of those drowning men,  
This thought : that, if Fate treats the self-same way  
The willing and unwilling, whether they  
Resist or yield, the end's the same end still,  
And bootless both, to will or not to will.  
Its next result inverted that conviction,  
Proving the force of truth by contradiction,  
Philosophy's chief triumph ! Thus, the first  
Of those two men, who, with a will athirst  
For sudden watery annihilation,  
Had jump'd into the river,—tho' natation  
Was not to him an art unknown, forewent it,  
Letting his body, as the current sent it,  
Drift will-less down the water, and from *volens*  
Became, comparatively speaking, *volens*.  
The other, who was in the same position  
Against his will, exerting strong volition,

Tax'd all his wits to compensate to him  
The sad chance of not knowing how to swim ;  
Call'd to his mind the bride who now no doubt  
Was wondering what her bridegroom was about,  
Imaged her loss in his ; and, fortified  
By fond emotions, strove against the tide  
With such a vigorous valour that at length  
He reach'd, and caught, and clutch'd with all his  
strength,  
The lean arm of a weeping willow tree ;  
Which o'er the water stoop'd, and seem'd to be  
Already making solemn preparation  
For his appropriate funeral oration.  
Tho' much it wept, the willow's nerves were strong :  
The man, meanwhile, cried lustily and long.  
And, since 'twas not in Latin that he cried,  
But that plain language everywhere employ'd  
By living creatures to express joy, pain,  
Or need, a ploughman on the neighbouring plain  
Heard him ; and, understanding from the sound  
That some one was unwilling to be drown'd,  
Ran to the rescue.

## 4.

Much at the same time  
The first man floated to a bank of slime  
Insensible, and stuck there : by and by  
Came to himself again : sprawl'd up : shook dry

His dripping rags : and, as the latest word  
Which, ere his senses left him, he had heard  
Was said in Latin, shivering as he dried him,  
The wretch sigh'd ruefully "*Non bis in idem !*"  
Then clamber'd to the shore with trailing tread,  
Slunk home, and sank, unsupper'd, into bed.—  
There, long in miserable plight he lay,  
Rack'd by an aguish fever night and day.  
But, since he could not pay the doctor's fees,  
Gratis the man recover'd by degrees.  
And now, one miracle another follow'd ;  
For by the last disease the first was swallow'd,  
Just as one nail drives out another one.  
Feeling his health and strength restored, anon,  
Ere he set out in search of work, the man  
To brush and clean his sand-caked clothes began.  
When, lo you, yet another miracle !  
The best of all. For, glittering as they fell,  
The grains of sand that off his garments roll'd  
Were mixt with grains of veritable gold.  
The poor man sought the well-remember'd bank  
Which for his cold, and gold, he had to thank.  
'Twas all auriferous. He tested it,  
But kept the secret—and the gold, till bit  
By bit a little capital he got.  
Therewith the bank he bought, and on the spot  
Built workshops, hiring out of many a land  
Workmen to wash the wealth from that rare sand.  
Plenteous the profit was, since pure the gold.  
And thus the man, at last, grew rich—and old.

## 5.

One day, came, footsore, from a distant Shire  
A workman asking work. Well worth his hire  
The stranger proved. A sober man was he,  
Hard-working, honest. Tho' he seem'd to be  
By something nobly mournful in his mien  
For better fortunes born, yet staid, serene,  
And silent, he his daily taskwork plied.  
With curious gaze full oft the master eyed  
This stranger : whom one day, when work was done,  
He sought, and, at the setting of the sun,  
Found by the river bank, with tearful eye  
Watching a willow tree that wept thereby.  
"Thou sufferest, honest friend ?" the good man cried.  
"I, too, have suffer'd. Trust me." Faintly sigh'd  
The other (answering not) "O willow tree  
*Ducunt volentem fata . . . woe is me . . .*  
*Nolentem trahunt !*" Much surprised to hear  
Those words, once heard before with drowning ear,  
The master ask'd, and learn'd, at last, what we  
Already know. With this much more : that she  
For whose sake this poor wretch had saved his life  
That life had fill'd with misery, shame, and strife,  
And at the last had left him, leaving not,  
To reconcile him to his ruin'd lot, \*  
Fortune or friends. Thus had he lived to hate  
That luckless hour when he, at strife with fate,  
Had won the victory. "Friend, forget the past !"  
The master cried. "In mine a home thou hast.

Nor wife have I, nor children. Be mine heir.  
Who art mine only kinsman, I declare.  
For kinsfolk of a sort we needs must be,  
Two fishes out of the same water, we !”  
Then, when the other hesitated, “Nay,”  
He added, laughing, “Fate will have her way.  
So, *volens volens*, it must needs be so.  
Shake hands upon it. There’s no saying no,  
When Fate saith ay.”

## 6.

Conversing thus, the two  
Whom Fate so strangely had united now  
By land, as once by water, by and by  
Bethought them of the Sage who from on high,  
When each was floundering in the flood below,  
Had graciously vouchsafed to let them know  
A truth ; which he, for the occasion, took  
From Seneca ; who stole it from the book  
Of some Greek Poet ; who had borrow’d it  
From some one else ; to whom some other Wit  
Had lent it first. So, forth the two friends set  
To find the Sage to whom they owed this debt.  
Him, after fruitless search for many a day,  
They found, when he was being borne away  
To his last resting-place.

Where, as ’tis fit,  
This story also ends. No fable it ;

Albeit not on that account a fact ;  
Since every fable must have to it tackt  
Some sort of moral. But such tales as these  
May serve for morals, if their readers please,  
To all those fabulous things which so confound us  
By really happening in the world around us.

## LII.

## SUUM QUIQUE.

## 1.

It was the hour when woods are cold  
And there is no colour in all the sky,  
Because night's blue is gone, and the gold  
O' the dawn not coming till by and by :  
It was the hour when vapours white  
Are over the dark meer rolling slow  
From the brewage brew'd by the water-sprite  
Who inhabits the sunless deeps below.

## 2.

In the reed and rush, 'twixt meer and fen,  
Two wild white Swans were fighting then ;  
For a wild white Swan-Bride fighting keen ;  
The lake's two lords for the lake's one queen.  
And altho' both woo'd her, but one could wed,  
And but one be victor, tho' both fought well.

And the vanquisht warrior, wounded, fled  
 Foom the wrath of his rival peer, and fell,  
 Over the reed-fenced rivage damp,  
 Into the filth of the fenny swamp ;  
 Whence the sound of his funeral hymn rose clear  
 From the marsh to the woodland, and over the meer.

## 3.

Thro' the reeds he crushes, from the forest rushes  
 The bristly bulk of the fierce Wild Boar ;  
 Crashing down bud and bush, pashing the mud and  
 slush,  
 And scattering filth from his cleft feet four.  
 And " Who is it that calleth for help ? " quoth he.  
 " Here, all who enter my subjects be.  
 Let the wronger beware ! and, if fight he can,  
 Fight for his life, or fly with speed !  
 Eh, . . . but, bless my bristles ! . . . a Swan ?  
 And, if I mistake not, a Swan indeed !  
 Welcome, Cousin ! Allow me, pray,  
 To ask what weather blew *you* this way ?  
 Or is it, O lord of the lucid lake,  
 (Thou stateliest swimmer !) that thy white neck  
 Is weary of watching each snowy flake  
 Of its whiteness imaged without a speck  
 In the over-perfect purity  
 And tedious calm of the crystal flood ?  
 And hast *thou*, too, learn'd, at last, to sigh  
 For the common, but more congenial, mud ?  
 Hah ! by each buffalo's cloven crest



In the herd of them put to flight by me,  
I swear (for I love thee, noble guest !)  
I will share mine acorn crops with thee,  
If thou, contented, a swine with swine,  
Wilt change those too-white plumes of thine  
For the bristles and hair  
We hogs do wear.  
Already, thy haughty beauty wanes !  
Fallen, tho' unresign'd, art thou.  
And the spurted slime of the fen's drench stains  
That princely bosom of spotless snow.  
Thou that immaculate swammest the meer,  
Wallow in mud, and be welcome, here !”

## 4.

Bleeding, aching, weary, and wan,  
Bitterly listen'd the noble swan,  
To those brutal words ; and “ O shame and grief !  
He moan'd, “ that in such a place—to me—  
And with such a speech—the ignoble chief  
Of an obscene herd should dare to proffer  
His fulsome friendship filthy and free,  
And a swan be shamed by a swinish offer ! ”

## 5.

With failing breath,  
On the threshold of death,  
By an effort vast  
(His saddest and last)

He arose ; and, quickly  
    Stanching his wound  
With the grasses sickly  
    That grow on such ground,  
Sprang forward ; crying  
    “ St Pelican !  
I die ; but, in dying,  
    Am still a swan !  
St Pelican hear me,  
    And grant my cry !  
In death be near me,  
    And let me die  
As I lived, at least,  
    A swan, not a beast,  
In mine own pure element's purity ! ”

## 6.

The Saint reprieved him.  
The wave received him,  
And, washing the stain from each wounded limb,  
On his deathbed bathed and rebaptised him.

## 7.

Then, backward turning his stately head,  
On the haunts of those he had scorn'd and fled  
He gazed ; and saw with a dying eye  
    Afar in the forest the filthy herd,  
Profaning its sacred groves, rush by ;  
    And the mirth of the wallowing monsters heard.

And "Each to his own !" the Wild Swan said,

"And his own to each ! and I to mine !

As the Swan to his purity, so to his bed

In the mud he was born for, returneth the Swine.

For, if a Swan fall in the filth of the fen

Where the dew turns slime and the green grows  
sallow,

And even the strong foot slips, what then ?

He doth but fall where the Swine doth wallow.

*Suum cuique,*

To live or die :

*Hic et ubique*

A Swan am I ! "

## LIII.

## THE TWO TRAVELLERS ;

OR,

## LOVE AND DEATH.

WE are not made for Beauty, nor for Love,  
Nor for Eternity,  
Perchance. But something in us, from above,  
Yearns to embrace all three.

Lost in a silent land of winter wild,  
Where, warming nothing, yet on all things smiled  
The eternal snows that lit that lonesome land,  
Two weary travellers wander'd, staff in hand,  
Over the frozen hills. Fast friends, together  
They two had fared thro' fortune's changing weather ;  
And each had loved ; and each life's common chance  
Had curst with war 'twixt love and circumstance.  
But<sup>o</sup> in that conflict, one to love, that claim'd,  
Had yielded, all : whilst one life's fate had freed

From love's embrace ; and, struggling forward, maim'd  
In every feeling, saved, not all, indeed,  
But all mere life hath left when love is dead,  
And dead, with love, life's sense of lovely things.  
Now, as they wander'd weary, round them spread  
(To make more weary still their wanderings)  
Endless tranquillity. And all the while  
Above them, and about them, everywhere  
Along the land and in the leafless air,  
Throughout that region of unblest repose  
They felt the fixt unsympathising smile  
Of the eternal snows.

It was the smile of Eternity,  
That smileth, whether men live or die.  
Every sorrow, and every joy,  
Every pleasure, and every pain,  
Hath something—it may be, all—to dread.  
But, with nothing to lose, and nothing to gain,  
Eternity smileth the smile of the dead.

“I have seen the Sphynx in the Desert” said  
To his fellow-pilgrim one of the twain,  
“And the smile upon Nature's face, methinks,  
Is as the smile on the face of the Sphynx :  
The smile of indifference ! Death smiles so,  
And so smiles Love—on the loss and woe  
That waste the hearts of his human prey  
When, having o'erwhelm'd them, he passeth away

As they sink in dust, to smile down for ever  
From his unattainable heaven so high  
On the generations, whose foil'd endeavour  
Cannot interpret, however it try,  
Nor answer, save by a feverish sigh,  
That inscrutable smile, with its unsad Never !  
For Love is Love, for aye, as of old :  
And, Spring by Spring, as the leaves unfold,  
Lives shall blossom in Love's strong sun  
That beameth for all, and abideth for none.  
But Life is mortal, tho' Love be not,  
And Death is, was, and shall be.  
And Nature heeds not her children's lot,  
A wanton mother is she !  
Friend, I am tired, and can no further fare.  
Here will I rest."—" Ah, madman !" cried the other,  
" Here is but Ruin with Rest's face. Beware !  
Shake off this fatal lethargy, my brother !  
'Tis Death that woos, and not Repose,  
The weary and unwise  
To his cold couch in these deep snows.  
Poor wretch, arouse ! arise !  
Some succour, sure, must be at hand,  
Some issue from this dreadful land.  
For lo ! where leans yon woodland high  
Along the windless air,  
Some woodman's hut methinks I spy,  
Or charcoal-burner's rude repair,  
A smoke is in the frosty sky.  
Deliverance must be near ! "

“ Ah, brother, prithee let me be.”

His comrade answer'd. “ Whither flee ?

Deliverance ! . . . dost thou seek it ? See,

’Tis at our feet—’tis here ! ”

And, as he spake, he sank. With a shrill cry  
The other turn’d, and fled : from peak to peak  
Springing, and clinging, dizzily, foot and hand.  
The upland forest, heavy, huge, and high,  
Seem’d slipping o’er him from its icy shelves.

And, wildly mocking the man’s human shriek,  
With most inhuman revelry,  
Outleapt the echoes of that lonesome land,  
Like mad malignant elves.

O’er the giddy steeps he climbs, he leaps,

And his breath is salt with blood.

And there’s blood in the skies—or blood in his eyes—

As, with reeling steps, and choking cries,

And broken strength, he reaches, at length,

The Woodman’s hut in the wood.

And his voice doth seem like a voice in a dream

When he shouts and beats at the Woodman’s door,

Faint and blind as a wasted wind

That beats its life out, trying to find

Its lost way over a moor.

“ Ope, Woodman ! ope

For charity !

Help ! help ! a rope,  
A hand ! Hard by  
On the nether slope  
Doth my comrade lie,  
Lost, if no hope  
Of help be nigh,  
For I can no more.  
Wake, Woodman ! wake,  
And open the door  
For Jesu's sake ! ”

“ Come hither ! come hither ! ” the Woodman cried  
To his four sons, “ and bear him inside,  
And pile him a bearskin bed,  
And cut the boots from his swollen feet.  
These famisht pulses feebly beat,  
But the poor wretch is not dead.”  
So the Foresters chafed him, limb by limb,  
Till, feebly, again, in each frozen vein  
The life-blood ran ; and the rescued man  
Felt Death's fingers releasing him.  
His lips they bathed in the cordial cup,  
And, alive at last, they lifted him up ;  
But leaving in Death's grip, lost and gone  
Life's ransom—claim'd by the hungry cold,  
Which had bitten his flesh to the very bone,  
So that what remain'd of the man thus saved  
Was a ruin—horrible to behold,  
On whose living flesh Death's mark was graved.



Then this living half of the half-saved man  
The search after his lost friend began,  
Whom he, and the Foresters, found at last  
Sunk in the drifted snow, beneath  
That desolate upland vague and vast,  
Dead—but beautiful in death.  
And over the dead man's face was cast  
The smile of the Sphynx : that smile which is  
The smile of indifference. Seeing this,  
He that saw it recall'd the past.

When, long since, they twain were young,  
And, as together they journey'd along  
Life's unknown, and yet untried, way  
Love o'ertook them, and seized his prey,  
The dead man there, now calm, and fair,  
With a mighty effort had broken Love's snare,  
Giving to him, the survivor now,  
The self-same counsel, to struggle on,  
He, himself, had refused, when he sank in the snow,  
And gave up the ghost ere the goal was won.  
Not so of yore ! when, with tears, he tore  
His tortured spirit from Love's control,  
But thus left for ever behind him, lost,  
The finest and fairest parts of his soul,  
Saving the rest of himself at their cost.

Now, he lay dead, with the smile on his face.  
Dead, but unblemisht, and fair in death,

And, over his features calm, the grace  
Of a peace unbroken by mortal breath.  
Maim'd in feature, and crippled in limb,  
The living man look'd down upon him ;  
And, fair, in the dead man's face (with awe  
Because of its careless beauty) he saw  
The image serene of his own dead soul.  
Dead—but in death still beautiful !

## LIV.

## AN ILL-ASSORTED COUPLE.

## 1.

THERE was a couple who could not agree,  
Tho' conjoin'd by a fate they were forced to obey.  
And of one of that couple the name was HE,  
And the name of the other did HE call THEY.

## 2.

Different in age, as in all, were the two ;  
The youngest HE, and yet ages old ;  
THEY even older, and short of view,  
As of hearing hard, if the truth be told.

## 3.

HE was resolved (and some sages say  
It is man's best study) to study himself ;  
Taking small heed of his yokemate. THEY  
Spared no abuse of the self-will'd elf.

## 4.

"HE," said THEY, "is the bitterest brute !  
A bear,—and his bearish actions show it."  
Which opinion settled beyond dispute,  
'Twas a miracle only could overthrow it.

## 5.

But falling sick, and recovering slowly,  
HE grew as tame as a brute could be ;  
And, his rebel habits reforming wholly,  
Meek and mild as a lamb was HE ;

## 6.

Doing whatever a lamb can do  
To evince the virtues for which man love it :  
Whilst THEY, disinclined to opinions new,  
Cried "HE is a bear, and his actions prove it !"

## 7.

Hard of hearing, and short of sight,  
Thus THEY took . . . was it ten years, or more ?  
To discover that all was at last lamb white  
In the blackness so bearishly black before.

## 8.

Truth, however, will find her way  
To the dullest brain, if you grant her time ;

And so after thus chiming its ten years, THEY  
Changed of a sudden this chiding chime.

## 9.

“HE,” at last said THEY, with no doubt at all,  
“Is the sweetest soul. We have wrong’d him, we.  
And that was but honey we took for gall.”  
Meanwhile (what was it sour’d him ?) HE,

## 10.

Because HE had tried and had fail’d to please,  
Or because of original sin, once more,  
A backslider, became by unblest degrees,  
The unsocial bear he had been before.

## 11.

Yet “HE,” cry THEY, and still go on crying,  
“Is the sweetest soul, and his actions show it !”  
Do THEY believe it, or are THEY lying ?  
One thing only is sure. I know it.

## 12.

Between a man and his reputation  
There is a space to be travell’d thro’ :  
And when rumour reaches its destination  
The tale it tells is no longer true.

## 13.

Each ray of the star you are praising to-night

Hath been long on its way to your world below :

And your praises, perchance, are bestow'd on the light

Of a star that hath perish'd an age ago.

## LV.

## BETWEEN HAMMER AND ANVIL.

(A SONG OF THE IRON AGE.)

## 1.

THE bellows, breathing, fann'd the forge :  
Forth sprang the thrill'd white sparks in throngs :  
The Young Smith from the furnace gorge  
Pluck'd out between his pinching tongs,  
And flat on the resonant anvil laid,  
The red iron, ablush with a radiant glow :  
The Old Smith, dealing it blow on blow,  
With his ponderous hammer the hot mass bray'd.

## 2.

And, whilst about it son and sire  
In mutual mirth their business plied,  
The iron, weeping tears of fire,  
To hammer and to anvil cried

“ It is iron ye be, yet, O torturing two,  
It is iron ye torture !” But “ Suffer thy lot,”—  
They replied to him, “ fool, and upbraid us not ;  
For there’s some one above us is dealing the blow.”

## 3.

Oh had the Old Smith, whirling fast  
His hammer, heard that talk ? For, gay  
He, thro’ the roar o’ the furnace blast,  
Laugh’d “ *Divide et impera !*”  
“ *Ámen ! Ámen !*” the iron replied, giving vent  
To a groan, as it grew to a sword. This, anon,  
To its place in the arsenal pass’d : and the son  
Of the Old Smith into the army went.

## 4.

One day the town’s bad blood broke out.  
The artizans arose in arms :  
The Civic Guard they put to rout,  
And fill’d the streets with fierce alarms.  
But the soldiers came cantering into the town :  
And, with patriot pride in so loyal a job,  
Slashing this way and that as he rode thro’ the mob,  
A young soldier by chance the ringleader cut down.

## 5.

“ My son !” the giant gasp’d ; and heard,  
As grovelling in his gore he lay,



A captain, who had given the word,  
Laugh "*Divide et impera!*"  
"*Ámen! Ámen!*" the Old Smith responded ; and died  
As the Young Smith, unnoticing, flourish'd his sword.  
Revolution was ended and order restored  
By the youth's unintentional parricide.

## 6.

The King then went to war. Long while  
His stricken subjects rued that day.  
The foeman gain'd by gold and guile  
One half the misruled realm away.  
Thus, against itself upon all sides turn'd,  
Did the gash'd land bleed at each gaping pore :  
They but meant it well, the two armies swore :  
Meanwhile they ravish'd, and robb'd, and burn'd.

## 7.

And in the last great fight of all  
The Old Smith's soldier son expired.  
His ribs were broken by a ball  
From his old Captain's pistol fired.  
But, before the last breath of his life he breathed,  
He resolved, at the least, not to breathe it in vain ;  
And the sword that erewhile had his father slain  
In the breast of his leader lost he sheathed.

## 8.

The conquering General rode that way,  
Glowing and fierce as Mars' own Flamen,  
Laugh'd "*Divide et impera!*"  
And gallop'd onward. "*Ámen! Ámen!*"  
With a finger sly on his Golden Fleece,  
(While the General gave his moustache a twist)  
Responded the smiling Diplomatist  
Commission'd to settle and sign the Peace.

## 9.

The Peace was sign'd : and, having wrought  
The conquest thus confirm'd, elate,  
The Military Party thought  
Itself the master of the State.  
But the Diplomat, hiding his own intent,  
The Generals, jealous and fierce, inflamed  
With a rival hope ; and the fools proclaim'd  
A Republic ; that chose him as President.

## 10.

For, whilst with faction faction fought,  
The moderate man slipp'd in between ;  
The votes of either party bought,  
And baulk'd them both. More calm and keen  
Than the rival chiefs that around him vied,  
When the popular choice he had charm'd away

The rogue laugh'd "*Divide, impera !*"  
Praising himself with a secret pride.

## 11.

Yet, tho' so soft the whisper'd word  
He, laughing in his sleeve, let fall,  
Its secret boast one listener heard ;  
Who, unobserved, observing all,  
Behind him stood with a downcast eye,  
And a serious smile on a meek lip set,  
As "*Ámen !*" he mutter'd, and softer yet  
"*Ámen !*" again, to his rosary.

## 12.

The Young priest, he, to whom by choice  
The dame, whose charms in private bless'd  
That charmer of the public voice,  
The weakness of the flesh confess'd.  
Thus craftsmen and soldiers and clerics and laymen  
Do the burden pass, as they pass their way :  
And the burden is *Divide impera !*  
And the response to it is *Ámen ! Ámen !*

## 13.

*Sic semper !* Iron still is dasht  
On iron : blood on blood. The hours  
That rock the round world, rolling clasht  
From the high tops of temple towers,

Are the hammers of Fate : and they fall and fall  
Heavy and fast on the anvil of Time ;  
Where Humanity changes its shape as they chime,  
And, save only in shape, never changes at all.

## 14.

'Twixt hammer, thus, and anvil bruised,  
The wretch upbraids that torturing two ;  
And they reply, the oft accused,  
“ There's one above us, deals the blow.”  
Who is it, then ? History's intricate page  
Can but reckon the strokes, and record the gravamen.  
*Stat pro ratione voluntas. Amen.*  
This is the song of the Iron Age.

## LVI.

## HOMO HOMINI LUPUS.

## 1.

SOME villagers who in their trap had caught  
An old sheep-stealing wicked Wolf at last,  
Resolved that he to trial should be brought,  
And judgment in due form upon him past.  
And since no Counsel could avail him aught,  
Because in fact his sentence was forecast,  
The Court, considering his case a grave one,  
Most graciously ordain'd that he should have one.

## 2.

They might have hang'd or headed him at once  
Without this legal circumbendibus,  
Since he was in their power for the nonce.  
But Justice loves, as cats do with a mouse,  
Not to make all at once her final pounce  
Without some fond preliminary fuss  
Of indecision. So the Court decided  
A Counsel for the Wolf should be provided.

## 3.

A man as full of learning as a book,  
A scientific traveller much respected  
By all the worthies of that rural nook  
Where he awhile was lodging, they elected  
To this good office : which he undertook  
Well pleased, since he for the accused detected  
Much to be urged. No harm the Wolf had done  
To flocks or herds of his. The man had none.

## 4.

The Prosecutor's speech, as it behoved,  
Was most laconically eloquent.  
"For, since the Wolf's a wolf, my case is proved."  
Said he, avoiding needless argument.  
Thro' no superfluous details he roved,  
But to the point with plain precision went,  
And cut his speech short, keeping to one head,  
The Wolf's ; which must be cut off too, he said.

## 5.

Upon the utterance of this demand  
The Culprit's learn'd Counsel show'd his teeth ;  
The Wolf's teeth, not his own, you understand.  
And goodly teeth they were ; above, beneath,  
Two rows of daggers formidably plann'd  
Their shining blades in flesh and blood to sheathe.

“ And you’ll admit,” he said, “ one fact is plain :  
Such tools were never made for grinding grain.

## 6.

“ But, as your shears for shearing wool were made,  
Which is the purpose that you put them to,  
So were the teeth set in this creature’s head  
For tearing flesh ; and he employs them so.  
What is there in such conduct to upbraid ?  
The Wolf is innocent. He does but do  
As Nature bids him ; whom obey he must.  
Then cut off Nature’s head, if you’d be just.

## 7.

“ This beast, moreover, (’tis no merit small)  
Is one of the best parents in creation.  
I, therefore, for the Wolf’s acquittal call,  
With damages to boot, and compensation  
From you his judges and accusers all,  
For false imprisonment and defamation.”  
The Judges and the Jurymen were, each  
And all, at first struck speechless by this speech.

## 8.

But soon, with sense of scandalised propriety,  
They left the Wolf, his Counsel to assail ;  
For language quite subversive of society,  
And doctrines which, if suffer’d to prevail,

Would place all honest folks in great anxiety,  
Despite of gallows, constable, and jail.  
Science escaped, sore bruised, from this affray,  
And the sly Wolf, ill guarded, slipp'd away.

## 9.

The Culprit and his Counsel being fled,  
No case remain'd before the Court. "I ween  
Never was such ill luck!" a Juror said.  
"That rogue, the Wolf, would certainly have been  
Condemn'd on every count, to lose his head,  
But for this most discreditable scene.  
For, what in our assemblies is so rare,  
This time we were unanimous, I'll swear."

## 10.

"Friend," said another, "then you'll swear too much.  
Peter would still have voted against Paul:  
First, since by nature, or by habit, such  
His practice is; and next, since, after all,  
He knew his counter-vote could work no touch  
Of difference in the sentence, great or small.  
Some men there be who vote in opposition  
Always, with safety, upon this condition.

## 11.

"The mischief is that, having now been told  
By that subversive scientific knave



That he is in his natural rights, made bold  
Thereby, the Wolf is likely to behave  
With even greater licence than of old ;  
And, fill'd with self-conceit, will fiercely crave  
The free indulgence of a natural right,  
To satisfy his wolfish appetite."

## 12.

"Nay, neighbours," said a third, "you are, indeed,  
Too hard upon the Doctor. By the way,  
Who was it, Martin, cured thy cough unfee'd?  
Who mended Peter's pump? And who, Paul, say,  
Taught thee, by crossing, to improve that breed  
Whose fleeces fetch'd the highest price to-day?  
Ye took his counsel then, which now you spurn  
Because, forsooth, it serves another's turn.

## 13.

"He said the Wolf was right to be a thief,  
And that is going far too far, say I.  
But then, he added that the Wolf's the chief  
Of all good fathers of a family ;  
Which gives the lupine character relief.  
That touch'd me, and should touch us all. For  
why?  
These dangerous characters have still a heart ;  
By which to win them is the statesman's art."

## 14.

So spake the Village Schoolmaster. He had  
A numerous family himself. In all  
Nine children, counting in the good and bad  
Together, and the big ones with the small.  
A fellow-father-feeling made him sad  
That even a rascal's family should fall  
Into starvation ; and his eyes grew dim,  
For his own eloquence drew tears from him.

## 15.

As for the Wolf, so far as can be guess'd,  
Nothing by all this praise and all this blame  
In him was alter'd. It must be confess'd  
A common error to think words make tame  
Or fierce such creatures. Wholly unimpress'd  
By all our talking, they remain the same.  
A wolf's a wolf : and nothing you can say  
Will change him, tooth or teat, say what you may.

## 16.

Good talkers, flatter not the hungry crowd.  
All your soft words will butter it no bread.  
Yet speak the truth, nor spare to speak it loud  
For fear lest Hunger's clamour to be fed,  
Acknowledged just, should wax too fierce and proud.  
Words change not facts. Friends, cut off Hunger's  
head :  
There'll be no wolves to fear, or flatter, then.  
If not ; beware of hungry wolves—and men !

## LVII.

## THE HORSE AND THE FLY.

## 1.

A HORSE-FLY stung a Coach-horse in the nose.

The Horse, with pain and terror of the bite,  
Rear'd, and (despite the Driver's cries and blows)  
Upset the coach ; and gallop'd out of sight.

## 2.

Side by side together, knitting  
Happy hand in hand, were sitting  
In the coach, when it roll'd over,  
Maiden-bride and Bridegroom-lover.

By a pair

More fond and fair

Bridal vows were never spoken :

And already rose in view

The sweet home they were journeying to,  
When the Bridegroom's neck was broken,  
And the Bride's heart broken too.

## 3.

The Coachman, from the coach-box thrown,  
Dash't out his brains on a boulder stone.  
The honest fellow behind him left  
A widow and orphans five bereft.

## 4.

Fast and faster the Horse, poor brute,  
Flying in vain from the feign'd pursuit  
Of the goading pang his own flesh hath in it,  
And fiercely quickening at each wild minute  
The impetuous speed of his desperate paces ;  
Whilst clamorous after him clatter the traces  
Which trail'd thro' a whirlwind of dust, he drags ;  
(With flat ears back laid, and red nostril flay'd,  
And flanks foam-oozing, that heave and smoke)  
Gallops into the town, gallops over the flags,  
Where, to left and to right in precipitous flight,  
He scatters the startled and terrified folk.

## 5.

After drifted blossoms straying,  
Birds and butterflies waylaying,  
Down the street a Child is playing :

Springing, singing, for pure joy,

All the world his pleasant toy ;  
A fair, rosy, bright-hair'd boy.

## 6.

And the people shout, and the people cry :  
And he hears the noise : but he knows not why  
The others are shouting, and he shouts too,  
For the joy of mere noise, as a child will do :  
And the galloping horse gallops over him.  
And that pretty Child (but a minute before,  
Life's merriest minim, all mirth and whim)  
Now a palpitant ruin bedabbled in gore,  
With bright head bleeding and broken limb,  
The people bear to his father's door.

## 7.

That father's only child was he :  
Lost heir to a princely pedigree :  
Last fruit of an old ancestral tree.

## 8.

Alas, what sufferings from a single cause !  
How many wrongs, how many miseries !  
What misdeeds punishable by no laws !  
Who was the guilty author of all these ?  
The Horse ? But what responsibility  
Have horses for their conduct, even when

No horse-flies bite them? Not the Horse? The Fly?  
Well, but the Fly's misdeed? what was it, then?

## 9.

Maternal love that Fly obey'd.  
Her eggs in Nature's lap she laid,  
And, moved by mother-instinct, tried  
For her own offspring to provide.

## 10.

Maternal Love, then, must we call  
Sole author of these mischiefs all?  
If so (at least on moral ground  
Which some folks hold the only sound)  
Methinks 'tis easier (search and try them)  
To make laws than to justify them.

## LVIII.

ET CÆTERA ET CÆTERA.

## 1.

I SAW a man die, miserably. Death

With lips disdainful of such sorry fare  
(Like one who, sauntering thro' his orchard saith  
'The fruit, tho' flyblown, that lies rotting there  
Must needs suffice me ') nibbled the remains  
Of life ; which long disease, with parching breath

Had ravaged so, that Death was doubtful where  
To bite what look'd no longer worth his pains.  
Naught of the wretch was left but sores and brains.

## 2.

And nothing in this corpse-about-to-be

Seem'd living yet but life's last beacons, two  
Bright feverish eyes, whence life defiantly

So fierce was flashing, that Death, fain to know  
What meant their dumb defiance, render'd back

A moment's breath to set the man's lips free;  
As hunters on a dying fire do blow  
For light to guide them on their dubious track,  
Ere they fare onward thro' the midnight black.

## 3.

Then, to Death's question, the death-rattle cried  
"Long perishing I lived. On pain I fed.  
I had no children, and I had no bride,  
Like other men. But with Disease I wed,  
And this, mine own death-hour, on her begot.  
Yet all so well, against life's woes allied,  
My solitary soul, from heel to head,  
Was arm'd in patience, they subdued her not.  
What she hath wrought can neither rest nor rot.

## 4.

"For in me a sublime idea hath lived;  
In me, and on me. What was I? Its food,  
And dwelling-house. I perish: but it thrived,  
And shall thrive. I have given it flesh and blood.  
That flesh and blood is mine. My whole life long  
Was for the good of this idea contrived,  
And all mine ills have but increased its good.  
*Non omnis moriar!* I still prolong  
My power in this, whose life mine own made strong.



## 5.

“For there it lives—in yonder leaves—complete !

Where yesterday these feverish fingers wrote  
The last word : not what crowns the closing sheet

Of vulgar volumes with appropriate note :

Not *FINIS*, my life’s labour’s last word was.

Because I doubt not of my guerdon meet,

Because the life, whereto did I devote  
Mine own life, here no mortal ending has,

Therefore my last word is *ÆTERNITAS*.

## 6.

“Yes ! mine idea shall live, bright, beauteous, glad.

In me all’s weak, but where is weakness here ?

In me all’s sorrow, here is nothing sad.

Clouded my life was, but my thought is clear.

The Spirit that thro’ formless space did flit,

Seeking fit form, its budding purpose clad

In a child’s brain, and breath’d in that child’s ear

‘Child, my thought chooseth for its servant fit,

Live for it, labour, suffer, die for it !’

## 7.

“That child was I, and I obey’d. Alas,

I lived to die. But, dying, I set free

A life that’s deathless. Into dust I pass

Content, because the thought that lived in me

Lives and shall live. 'Tis well. My work is done.  
FINIS for me : for it ÆTERNITAS !”

That was the man's last word. His work and he  
Are both forgotten. Underneath the sun  
Naught is eternal save Oblivion.

## 8.

I saw a chrysalis. It hung beneath  
My lattice eaves. I watch'd with hopeful eye  
The bright release of that embodied breath,  
The dead worm's destined beauteous butterfly.  
I tapp'd it, and there came a hollow sound.  
In Sleep's similitude, already Death  
Dreaming the birth of a new life did lie.  
I broke its shining shell. And there I found  
Another chrysalis within it bound,

•

## 9.

But swollen big, and just about to burst ;  
A second and surprising chrysalis,  
Whose growth had eaten hollow all the first,  
Which it would soon have shatter'd. What was  
this ?  
The egg of an ichneumon : who, within  
The moth-grub's miserable frame, had nurst  
Her bastard babe, and fed on borrow'd bliss  
Its being, buried in her victim's skin  
Pierced, for that purpose, with a cloven pin.

## 10.

The first *eruca*, thus, the second fed.

*Sic vos non vobis !* The poor moth-grub pined.

The young *ichneumon* in the moth-grub led

A prosperous life. Upon the patron dined

The client, well. The moth-grub labour'd sore,

And starved. The *ichneumon* lack'd not board or bed.

The second flourish'd as the first declined.

The moth-grub died. The *ichneumon* lived the more,

Wanton and wing'd, and livelier than before.

## 11.

Doubtless that moth-grub knew not its own state :

Felt deep disquiet, and divined not why :

Was proud, perchance, that in it something great

Grew, and grew greater. Was it haunted by

Ambitious dreams? Meanwhile with toil intense

It must have labour'd, to emancipate

The life within it. Thus, its enemy,

And idol also in a certain sense,

The poor fool fatten'd at its own expense.

## 12.

And did it, when it wove its death-shroud, say

(Poor worm, that ne'er a butterfly might be,

Whose past was pinch'd, whose future filch'd away

By that which lived within it !) even as he

Whom I saw dying, did it say, "I pass,  
 My work remains. The Spirit I obey,  
     As fittest out of thousands, fixt on me  
 For that sublime idea whose slave I was.  
 FINIS for me : for it AETERNITAS !"

## 13.

Ah, 'fittest out of thousands?' Yet behold !  
 The ichneumon which upon this worm did prey  
 Will find just such another worm to fold  
     The egg it is its wont in worms to lay.  
 And from that egg will soar another fly,  
 Which, in its turn, will do as did the old.  
     And thus *et cætera, et cætera,*  
*Et cætera*, which, far as we can spy,  
 Is also Latin for Eternity.

## 14.

Patience hath of ichneumons pointed out  
 As many as three hundred different kinds,  
 All living on as many kinds, no doubt,  
     Of different insects : as, on different minds,  
 Different ideas. Brains, we must avow,  
 The strongest, cannot yet *per annum* sprout  
     Three hundred new ideas ; and man finds  
 The old ones troublesome. But troubles grow,  
 And even the weakest brains breed notions now.

## 15.

Meanwhile, whenever I behold a man

With burthen'd forehead, bald before his time,  
And visage, like a lamp at noontide, wan,

Who thinks, by nourishing some thought sublime,  
To pay himself, in death, life's many pains ;  
And, having spent his strength in prose or rhyme

On some idea which hath been the ban  
Of all his being, boasts " My work remains,"  
I muse " What maggot hath he in his brains ? "

## LIX.

## MONUMENTUM ÆRE PERENNIUS.

## 1.

Two neighbours from each other claim'd a field,  
And neither of the two his claim would yield.  
Wild words between them pass'd. These nothing  
skill'd.

Blows follow'd words ; and one of them was kill'd.  
The dead man's kinsfolk then together came,  
Sworn to do justice : and did just the same.  
That is to say, they did a second time  
What, done the first time, they had judged a crime,  
And slew the slayer. From these deaths arose  
'Twixt tribe and tribe long strife of living foes ;  
Who in the dead men's quarrel fought, until  
Which of the dead men did the other kill  
Was by their hostile progeny forgot ;  
And neither side could quite remember what  
Each side was fighting for, tho' generations  
Prolong'd the conflict, and at last two nations

In arms opposed each other. The sole aim  
And end of all such conflicts is the same,  
Whether two peasants or two peoples fight :  
Each from the other strives to wrest the right ;  
Each on the other strives to wreak the wrong ;  
And each, as both the varying strife prolong,  
Is vanquisht or is victor, turn about.  
For, as " the whirligig of time " whirls out  
Alternate chances, is the vanquisht race  
Avenged on the victorious. In this case,  
Born of the conquer'd tribe, arose (men say)  
After long centuries had roll'd away,  
A conqueror : who, in half a hundred fights,  
The wrongs of his slain fathers to the rights  
Of their more fortunate sons converted ; slew,  
And led to slaughter, thousands ; but o'erthrew  
The overthrower, and to dust beat down  
A secular oppression. Tower and town  
Tumbled in smoky ashes, heaps of bones  
Pasht and in a bloody puddle, gasps and groans  
Of masht-up men, a mass of different deaths  
Mixt with a murmur of admiring breaths,  
Founded the FIRST eternal monument  
Which in men's memories made this last event  
Imperishable ; and, with gush of gore  
And glory from men's minds for evermore  
Wiped out the first, poor, perishable, mean  
Cause of the conflict, which thereby had been  
Crown'd with immortal claim upon the praise  
And retrospective pride of after days.

## 2.

To many a lyre by many a lyrist strung,  
About the land that hero's deeds were sung.  
And many a homely lay, from door to door,  
From sire to son, repeated o'er and o'er,  
Transmitted to a far posterity  
Traditions of his worth. But, rolling by,  
Time, in its unretentive current, brought  
New interests, new desires, to thrust from thought  
The rusted image of the Heroic Age ;  
Whereof this monument remain'd to wage  
War with Oblivion. Vainly ; till, by chance,  
Its mouldering record caught the fervid glance  
Of one who, haunted by a name forgot,  
Raked in old legends long remember'd not  
For glimpses of that name ; which, like a star  
Flashing mysterious splendour from afar,  
Brighten'd the abysmal past. Its fading beams  
This poet mingled with his own fresh dreams,  
And wrought therefrom, to renovate renown,  
A poem which the whole world for its own  
Claim'd and forthwith immortalised. Thereof  
(As, from the music of Amphion, rough  
With topless towers, arose in circuit strong  
The Theban ramparts raised by rolling song)  
A new eternal monument was made :  
Whose glory cast into oblivious shade  
(Or in its brighter self absorb'd anon)  
The lesser lustres of the former one.



For, from this fresh eternal monument  
Gracing the threshold of an age, were sent  
Memnonian melodies and echoes far,  
Waked by the radiance of the rising star  
Of a new art more beautiful than war.

## 3.

The old eternal monument, meanwhile,  
Whereof naught rested but a ruin'd pile  
Of names and dates (mere useless rubbish reckon'd)  
Had furnish'd forth foundations for the SECOND.

## 4.

And all men deem'd the Poet's work to be  
More lasting than the Hero's. Nathless, he  
Who wrote the poem which, by men proclaim'd  
Immortal, made its mortal parent famed,  
Had died of want in some obscure small town.  
Men search'd, in vain, the empire up and down  
To find his birthplace ; and, not finding it,  
(Tho' many volumes were to help them writ,  
Each volume proving hopelessly absurd  
Whatever by the others was averr'd)  
The baffled seekers by degrees began  
To shape the ideal image of the man  
Out of his song ; imagining a face  
And figure suited to his spirit's grace.  
The State, then, order'd that this image, cast  
In ever-during bronze, should be at last

Erected in the imperial capital  
On a tall pillar ; to be seen of all  
Who there, throughout the ages, came and went.

## 5.

This was the THIRD eternal monument ;  
Which all the previous monuments effaced.  
And the great poet's name, upon it traced,  
Was read by multitudes who read no more  
The old-fashion'd verses whence that name of yore  
Its immortality of fame received ;  
Which from Oblivion nothing new retrieved  
Save the bronze image, on whose marble base  
His name still figured, in the market place.

## 6.

Long while this third eternal monument  
Struggled with time, and the wild weathers bent  
On its destruction. But it felt their strength ;  
And, bit by bit, the rain and rust at length  
Wore out the graven words and sculptured frieze.  
The image, also, dwindled by degrees.  
One day the lightning struck it, and it fell.  
At least, so saith the civic chronicle  
Which is our warrant (since we cannot show  
Proof more conclusive) for believing now  
That such a statue once commemorated  
The birth (by modern critics much debated)

Of such a poet. Nowadays you see  
A brave soap-boiling manufactory  
Upon the spot where once that statue stood,  
Which made immortal, for the multitude  
That moved beneath it in the days gone by,  
The poet's unremember'd memory ;  
Who sung the imperishable song ; that wrought  
Renew'd eternity in human thought  
For that immortal hero's deathless name ;  
Whose perisht immortality of fame  
Rose from the reek of bloody towns ablaze,  
Even as the smoke that rises nowadays  
From yon tall chimney ; which yet marks the spot  
Where stood the statue men remember not.

## 7.

These facts we have thought fitting to consign  
In the foregoing record, line by line,  
To the attention of posterity ;  
In order that we haply might thereby  
Save all these otherwise entirely lost  
Eternities ; which mutually cost  
Each other's ultimate annihilation.  
Nothing remains of them, but this narration.

## 8.

And, if this last must be forgotten too  
(Leaving no vestige to the future) who  
Will owe its author (the FOURTH time, alas !)  
' A monument more durable than brass ?'

## I. X.

## S A N S   S O U C I.

## PROLOGUE.

WORK ! But when can I work, pray, when ?  
At morn ? I have not yet done my doze.  
At noon ? But too heavy the heat is then.  
At eve ? But eve is the time for repose.  
At night ? But at night I'm asleep again.  
Work ? What is it ? As I suppose,  
'Tis the vain invention of idle men ;  
Whom the Devil could help to no happier plan  
For getting thro' time, than this idiot trick  
Of adding fatigue to fatigue ; like a man  
Who carries his boots at the end of a stick  
Slung behind him, to add to the heat  
And the weight on his back ; as, with limping feet,  
Thro' the flints that tear, and the thorns that  
prick,  
He fares barefooted, and boasts he can  
With such bootless trouble get on so quick.

If you chanced, as you wander'd, to meet with a brook

Flowing among the mountains, say

Would you hasten back to the house, and look

For a bucket to fetch the water away

Into the valley? Down from the hills

Let the water flow as the water wills.

When it gets to the valley at last, some day,

There will it stay, unashamed? or say

"To work! to work!" and begin with pain

To run up the hills and back again?

Enough is doing around it. Why

Should itself be doing aught? The sun

Reveals to it all that, up in the sky,

The weather is going to do, or hath done.

The moon will bathe in it by and by;

And the stars, that follow her one by one,

Seek and discover it,

Peeping thro'

Clouds that flow over it,

Changed in hue

By winds that o'erhover it,

Hid in the blue.

Barks, too, along it

From shore to shore

Will wander, and throng it

With sail and oar.

Each bending double,

With sweat o' the brow

From toil and trouble,

The rowers row,

But, how fast soever their oars may fall  
The water, which takes no trouble at all,  
Will still be the first to leap to shore.  
And, what is more, when the voyage is o'er,  
Will still be as fresh as it was before.

Lie on the bank, then ! idly lie  
Beside me, watching the wave flow by.  
And, if Fancy follow it, heed not why.  
Heed not why, and heed not where.  
Fancy will find in the summer air  
Whatever she seeks, for her home is there.  
Let us open our hearts to the summer sky.  
From mine I have let this fable fly.  
Who knows where it may 'light ? Not I.

## PART I.

There were two brothers. And each of the two  
Said to the father of both " Let us go  
Forth and away, O Father, from thee.  
For the world is fair : and eager are we  
To be living there, with a life set free."  
And the Father said to his sons " Do so."  
But, first (for a mighty magician was he)  
" My sons," he said, " the world is wide ;  
What in it attracts you most, decide.  
And then ask (ye shall get it) the gift of me  
Which best for the choice of you each may be.'

And "O Lord our Father," the sons replied,  
"Even so! and to each, as the choice, be the dower."  
Then he carried them up where, in all its pride,  
From the summit serene of a specular tower  
Might be descried upon every side  
The whole round world. And, opening at once  
The magazines of his manifold power,  
He said to them "Chuse, and use, my sons."

The First made choice of a pair of legs.  
Stout flesh and blood, no wooden pegs ;  
But legs of muscle and sinew strong,  
That could do whatever a man's legs can.  
"And with these," quoth he, "will I get along,"  
As he put them on and became a MAN.  
The Second laid hold on a sturdy root,  
Pleased with its power of fixing fast ;  
Hid himself with it ; and, shoot by shoot,  
Became, tho' slowly, a TREE at last.

The man in possession of that stout pair  
Of human legs, by the help of these  
Trode many a road, scaled many a stair,  
Climb'd the mountains, traversed the seas,  
Braved strange weathers, and breathed strange air,  
Learn'd new manners, new languages,  
Saw crowded cities, and deserts bare,  
Felt the dogstar burn, and the polestar freeze,  
Ransack'd earth for the far, the fair,  
And yet nowhere on earth could the man find ease.

For, wherever he thought to have settled, there  
Something he noticed which fail'd to please,  
Or something he miss'd which had pleased elsewhere.  
And the worse he fared the further he went,  
For comparison everywhere ruin'd content.  
Those legs ran away with him : day by day  
Wearing his life out ; and wearing away  
His boots ; which to mend, he was forced to spend,  
And, in order to spend, was forced to get,  
And, in order to get, to earn by the sweat  
Of his brow, the gold which in getting and spending  
The man wax'd old ; still wearily wending  
That way thro' the world whereunto is no ending.

## PART II.

Long tired of that long way, he sank at last  
Worn out upon the wayside sod, beneath  
A mighty tree ; whose branches o'er him cast  
Shade that was shelter, haunted by the breath  
Of hidden flowers. A rivulet flow'd past  
From out-of-sight to out-of-sight ; and, flowing,  
Call'd out calm sadness from the silence vast  
Wherein hot noon was glowing.  
Then did that old man feel thro' all his frame  
A creeping rest. His legs, whose strength was spent,  
Left him at last in peace ; and he became  
Careless and conscious of a vague content.



But, while he follow'd with incurious gazes  
The streamlet flowing where aught pleased it best,  
That melancholy, which in man's soul raises  
Emotion born of rest,  
Drew from the old man's eyes another stream  
(Whose source was in his spirit) of sad tears.  
And, as some spot which only in a dream  
A man remembers, who forgets the years  
That made it long forgotten, so to him  
Return'd a memory of that mystic minute  
When life's choice lay before him, with a dim  
Desire of action in it.

"Alas!" he wept, "what wasted tears  
Are these which weep my wasteful years!  
And all this while, what have I done  
But still from disappointment run  
To disappointment? With what pain  
What mountains have I climb'd in vain!  
What flesh and blood these feet have left  
On flinty peak, in thorny cleft!  
How many a time these knees and shins  
Have suffer'd for their owner's sins!  
How often, falling bruised and sore,  
With rage have I arisen once more,  
To stumble on, I know not where  
And know not how—such vagrants were  
These worn-out legs! What have I gain'd,  
Who, leaving all, have naught attain'd,  
And naught have kept? I wonder how  
It fares with my lost brother now."

## PART III.

Then sound that, flowing, follow'd sound  
    Rippled the leaves above him.  
And the branches, bending down to the ground,  
    A canopied cradle wove him.

As still as a tired child that is taking  
    Sweet rest on its mother's knee,  
The grey old man, neither sleeping nor waking,  
    Lay under the green old tree.

And was it brother speaking to brother?  
    For he heard the tender tone  
Of a voice that seem'd not the voice of another,  
    Though he knew that it was not his own.

It was sweeter than all other voices are.  
    It was not like the voice of a man.  
It seem'd so near, and yet seem'd so far,  
    And it spake as no other voice can.

## PART IV.

Softly it murmur'd "Dost thou know me not,  
    My brother? I, the Forest, I am he,  
The one friend left thee in earth's one safe spot,  
    Whose love, where'er thou wanderest, waits for  
    thee ;

“ Outlasting all things for the loss of which  
That love is consolation : gold misspent,  
Youth wasted, hope impoverisht, to make rich  
The thankless avarice of discontent.

“ Love faithful, love unchangeable, and fast  
As is the root whereby 'tis fixt and fed !  
Vainly the world, wherein no root thou hast,  
Thou wanderest seeking what, when found, is fled.

“ And think'st thou I am solitary ? Thou  
It is who art a wandering solitude.  
For from thy life away thy life doth flow,  
And, self-pursuing, thou art self-pursued.

“ “ Not here,” thou sigh'st, “ I live, for life is there.”  
Yet, hadst thou waited, life had come to thee,  
Who, seeking life, hast miss'd it everywhere ;  
Whilst here, where rest is mine, life sends to me

“ Momently messengers, that know the way  
To find me, from the world's four corners come.  
The winds, and clouds, and stars of heaven, are they,  
And the sweet birds that to my heart fly home.

“ Count me the emmets that go up and down  
My creviced bark. Know'st thou what myriads  
move

In any blade of grass o'er which is thrown  
The shadow of my power and of my love ?

“What lurks and crouches under any stone  
That nestles at my feet? What builds and breeds  
In my least berry? Or what deeds are done  
Even by my least distinguishable seeds?

“The Tree stands steadfast, contemplating all.  
Tree-trunk from tree-trunk earth holds safe and  
single :  
But, weaving one etherial coronal,  
Tree-top, in heaven, doth with tree-top mingle.

“What buoyant bridges, which the squirrel knows,  
How airy light, how delicately wrought,  
The elm-tree to his beechen brethren throws,  
Where branch with branch is mixt, as thought with  
thought !

“All this the Tree hath of the root he hath.  
For whoso hath no root, no life hath he.  
No path leads to him. And by every path  
He from himself must needs a wanderer be.”

#### PART V.

Whilst thus the mystic voice yet spoke,  
Harsher sounds thro' the forest broke.  
And men came thro' it, and men came near,  
With shoulder'd axe. “What do ye here

Intruders?"—"Ho! we hew down wood.  
Idler, make way for Work!" They stood  
Under the tree; and the axe was laid  
To the root thereof; and the tall tree sway'd  
To and fro, and then crash'd to the ground.

The old man, stunn'd (but not by the sound)  
About him gazed with bewilder'd eye  
Over the alter'd earth and sky,  
And "What is it," he moan'd, "that is broken in  
me?"  
As he follow'd his brother, the fallen tree.

Follow'd the tree to the timber-yard:  
Learn'd the craft of the carpenter:  
Plied hammer and saw, and labour'd hard,  
Laid plank upon plank, join'd oak to fir,  
Till the stately vessel slid from the slips,  
Slid from the land, and slid into the sea.  
There, with those new-gotten wings of hers,  
To wander the waters—a ship among ships,  
Who no longer a tree among trees might be,  
And (a mariner, there, among mariners)  
With the rest of the good ship's crew went he,  
The man, not able to leave the tree.

## PART VI.

On the sideless seas, in the middle hour  
Of the savage and measureless night ; when stars  
By curdling clouds were quench'd, and a shower  
Of stormy sleet thro' shrouds and spars  
Shriek'd ; and the grieved ship seem'd to cower  
Under night's weight, as wild she ran  
Across the cruel grey waves ; the man  
Lean'd his ear to the tree (which fast  
Stood over him still, a mighty mast)  
For the wood, with an inward moan, began  
To writhe and heave : till there came at last  
A thunderous buffet of wave and wind  
That shatter'd the ship. And, swept by the blast  
Into the murderous midnight, blind  
With madden'd weather, clinging together,  
O'er the headlong sea the man and the tree  
Drifted to shore on a desert isle.

The ship and the crew had perisht meanwhile.  
But the man was alive : and the tree (twice dead)  
Which had saved him, still protected him.  
For of part thereof, to shelter his head,  
A roof he wrought ; and each dripping limb  
He dried and warm'd at the fire he made  
Of the rest of the wood. And when morning rose  
Over the reefs, with ravage spread,

As tho' on a world all newly made,  
And smiling, safe from its last birth-throes,  
In freshness, sweetness, light, and repose,  
The man, left lone in the desert, said  
“ Oh what a release ! to be left in peace  
By all that trouble of tiller and tackle,  
The captain's cries, and the shipmen's cackle !  
Each rope and sail, and yard and shroud,  
That, in calm or gale, no quiet allow'd,  
But must ever be shifted that way and this  
For fear of shipwreck ; which, all the same,  
In spite of our trouble and caution came.  
And oh how delicious the freedom is  
From all care henceforth of the cargo that's gone,  
Or the ship, that is sunk, or the voyage, that's done ! ”

## PART VII.

Years, long afterwards, mariners, driven  
By stress of weather, touch'd on that isle,  
Where their ship had found a natural haven  
Hidden from howling storms. And while  
The desert, in search of springs, they roved,  
In the desert they found a fallen pile  
Of spars and planks ; whose structure proved  
That a human hand had fashion'd and hewn  
That pile, long since by the sea-winds strewn.

And, under the ruins which once were a hut  
(Safe from the ruining sea-winds shut)  
A dead man lay. And the dead man's face  
Yet wore, in its features worn, that trace  
Which a life in the waste cannot all efface  
Of a life once lived in busier lands.

The mariners buried with pious hands  
That dead man's dust in the desert sands.  
And, since they found two spars of a tree  
Which none of the island trees could be  
(Parts they seem'd of a broken mast,  
Haply to shore with the dead man cast)  
They set them, crosswise, above the grave  
Of their fellow-creature ; in sign of the faith  
Which, finding but death in life, men have  
That man's spirit is made for a life in death.

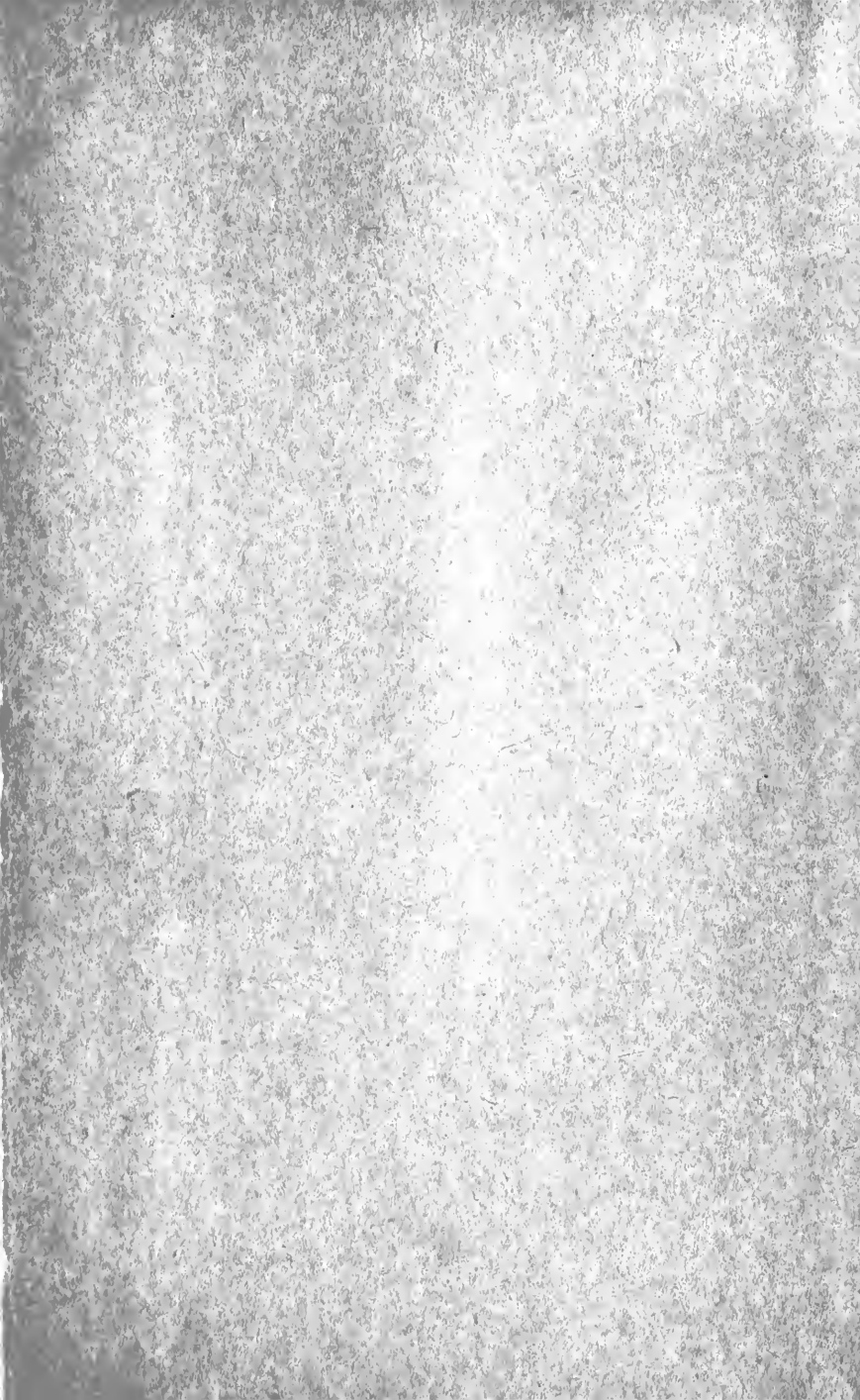
It was the last protection that the tree  
Could give the man, his brother.  
And ah, if helpless that protection be,  
What help in any other ?

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.









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